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[H.A.S.C. No. 113–55]

PROPOSED AUTHORIZATION TO USE MILITARY FORCE IN SYRIA

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ONE HUNDRED THIRTEENTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

HEARING HELD
SEPTEMBER 10, 2013

U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE
82–961 WASHINGTON : 2014

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PROPOSED AUTHORIZATION TO USE MILITARY FORCE IN SYRIA

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES,
Washington, DC, Tuesday, September 10, 2013.

The committee met, pursuant to call, at 10 a.m., in room 2118, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Howard P. "Buck" McKeon (chairman of the committee) presiding.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. HOWARD P. "BUCK" MCKEON, A REPRESENTATIVE FROM CALIFORNIA, CHAIRMAN, COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

The CHAIRMAN. Committee will come to order.

Before we begin the business of the committee, I want to make clear that members of the audience must maintain order, and refrain from manifestations of approval or disapproval of the committee proceedings, or interfere with the conduct of the committee's business. Any comments or disruptions during the hearing from the public will not be tolerated and, if necessary, will result in removal from the committee room. I want to state this at the outset so everybody knows the rules.

Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. The House Armed Services Committee meets to receive testimony on the President's proposed authorization to the use of military force in Syria. Our witnesses include Secretary of State John Kerry, Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel, and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Martin Dempsey.

Gentlemen, thank you for being with us today. You have had a very, very busy week. We appreciate your time and the effort that you have made to be with us and to inform this committee and the American public of the important work that you are engaged in.

This committee has closely monitored the conflict in Syria. Throughout, this committee has focused on understanding the strategic context, the options, the risks of those options, as well as the costs of military action in Syria. Today I hope our witnesses will focus not only on the case for military action that has been made over the last 2 weeks, but also address the justifiable concerns that have been raised by Members on a bipartisan basis. This includes understanding more about likely second-order effects, how a limited strike will achieve our policy goals, and the planning that has been done to respond should Assad miscalculate in terms of both operational and financial planning. What options, short of additional military action, do we have to respond to escalation or retaliation.

Secretary Hagel, although you have estimated that this operation will cost tens of millions of dollars, in April of this year you testi-

fied, "Let's start with the question of how do you pay for military action in Syria if we do something. Yes, I think it's pretty clear that a supplemental would be required."

History tells us that there will likely be second- or third-order effects that demand further U.S. military action. Therefore, it gives me great pause that we have not addressed the devastating cuts to our military due to sequestration, even as we commit our military to another new mission. We have surged troops to Afghanistan and cut the military's budget. We have flown missions over Libya and cut the military's budget. We are pivoting to the Asia-Pacific and cutting the military's budget. All told, these cuts total an outstanding $1.2 trillion, and now we are considering strikes on Syria while the military's budget continues to be cut.

I share President Obama's concern about Assad's vicious use of chemical weapons on his people. I am also deeply concerned about the United States standing in the region. When the President drew his red line, he put America's cards on the table. A leader either enforces his red lines, or he becomes irrelevant. However, I am equally concerned about the condition of a military that has been chewed up from budget cuts, and years of fighting, and the lack of certainty.

This Chief and the Chiefs that serve with him have not had a budget in their term in this office. They do not know really what they have to spend at the end of this month going into next year. It is not a way to run an organization. We cannot keep asking the military to perform dangerous mission after mission with multiple rounds of defense cuts, including sequestration, hanging over their heads.

Through decisiveness, clarity of purpose, and leadership, the President has the power to allay many of these concerns. I look forward to answers to these questions and to your testimony here today.

[The prepared statement of Mr. McKeon can be found in the Appendix on page 61.]

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Smith.

STATEMENT OF HON. ADAM SMITH, A REPRESENTATIVE FROM WASHINGTON, RANKING MEMBER, COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

Mr. SMITH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank you for this hearing. I want to thank our witnesses, Secretary Kerry, Secretary Hagel, General Dempsey, for being here and for your outstanding leadership during this crisis and on many, many other difficult issues that we face as a country.

I think there is no question at this point that Assad used chemical weapons in Syria. The evidence, the intelligence case that has been made has been overwhelming in the hearings that I have been to. This, of course, is on the heels of a civil war in which Assad has killed somewhere in the neighborhood of 100,000 of his own civilians, which is a series of abhorrent acts in and of themselves.

The challenge for us in this panel, you know, and for the people who are testifying today is how best to respond to all of this, how best to hold President Assad accountable for all of this. There is

no question, and I agree completely, that trying to control proliferation of chemical weapons is a goal that we must have as a Nation and must go forward. But can a one-time limited military strike accomplish that? And I think what our committee wants to hear today is how is that going to happen? How will this one-time strike be enough to hold Assad accountable, while not creating more chaos and running the risk that these very dangerous weapons would fall, frankly, into even more dangerous hands, given the presence of Al Qaeda and other groups in Syria that would not be friendly to us, and it would be very dangerous. How do you strike that balance between holding Assad accountable and not creating a worse situation? It is very, very difficult. We are going to have some serious questions today as to how that is accomplished, and we look forward to hearing answers from our witnesses to help us better understand this problem.

Also, we are very interested in how serious the Russian proposal is. If you think that is a worthy goal in terms of holding Assad accountable and eliminating the chemical weapons, is that something that can happen? We definitely want to hear how you think that plays into our decisions going forward.

Lastly, I just want to agree with the chairman on sequestration. It is an enormous problem. Certainly it adds a layer of complication for every conflict that comes up, including the one in Syria. And personally I would end sequestration tomorrow. You know, we can talk about how to get the budget deficit under control long term, revenues and spending and all of that, but the one thing we know is that sequestration is really devastating our military, causing a number of problems in other portions of the budget. It was never meant to be implemented; it was meant to be a forcing mechanism, an intention that has clearly failed. I think we should just eliminate it, and then we can get back to a discussion of how to control the deficit without torturing the discretionary budget on a day-in-and-day-out basis. So if this Syrian crisis prompts a more serious discussion of that, that will be one tiny little positive in what is otherwise a very, very dangerous situation.

I look forward to the testimony and to the questions from our committee. And again, I thank this distinguished panel for being here today.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Smith can be found in the Appendix on page 63.]

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Secretary Kerry.

STATEMENT OF HON. JOHN KERRY, SECRETARY OF STATE

Secretary KERRY. Chairman McKeon, Ranking Member Smith, and distinguished members of the committee, privileged to be here this morning with Secretary Hagel and General Dempsey. And we are, all of us, all three of us, very much looking forward to a conversation with you about this complicated, challenging, but critical issue that our country faces.

And we don't come to you lightly. I think Secretary Hagel and I particularly come here with an enormous amount of respect for this process, for what each of you go through at home, and the challenges you face with constituents, and the complexity of this

particular issue. So this is good. It is good that we are here, and we look forward to the conversation.

And as we convene at this hearing, it is no exaggeration at all to say to you that the world is watching, and they are watching not just to see what we decide, they're watching to see how we decide it. Whether or not we have the ability at this critical time, when so much is on the line in so many parts of the world, as challenges to governance writ large, it is important that we show the world that we actually do have the ability to hopefully speak with one voice, and we believe that that can make a difference.

Needless to say, this is one of the most important decisions that any Member of Congress makes during the course of their service, and we all want to make sure we get plenty of time here for discussion. Obviously this is a very large committee, and so we will try to summarize in these comments and give the opportunity for the Q&A [questions and answers].

But I just want to open with a few comments about questions I am hearing from many of your colleagues and, obviously, from the American people and what we read in the news.

First, people ask me, and they ask you, I know, why we are choosing to have a debate on Syria at a time when there is so much that we need to be doing here as home, and we all know what that agenda is. Let me assure you the President of the United States didn't wake up one day and just kind of flippantly say, "Let's go take military action in Syria." He didn't choose this. We didn't choose this. We are here today because Bashar al Assad, a dictator who has chosen to meet the requests for reform in his country with bullets and bombs and napalm and gas, because he made a decision to use the world's most heinous weapons to murder more than, in one instance, more than 1,400 innocent people, including more than 400 children. He and his regime made a choice, and President Obama believes, and all of us at this table believe, that we have no choice but to respond.

Now, to those who doubt whether Assad's actions have to have consequences, remember that our inaction absolutely is guaranteed to bring worse consequences. You, every one of you here, we, all of us, America will face this, if not today somewhere down the line, when the permissiveness of not acting now gives Assad license to go do what he wants and threaten Israel, and threaten Jordan, threaten Lebanon, create greater instability in a region already racked by instability where stability is one of the greatest priorities of our foreign policy and of our national security interests.

That brings me to the second question that I have heard lately, which is sort of what is really at stake here? You know, does this really affect us? I met earlier today with Steve Chabot and had a good conversation. I asked him, you know, "What are you hearing?" I know what you are all hearing. The instant reaction of a lot of Americans anywhere in our country is, whoa, we don't want to go war again, we don't want to go to Iraq, we don't want to go to Afghanistan. We have seen how those turned out.

I get it. And I will speak to that in a minute. But I want to make it clear at the outset, as each of us at this table want to make clear, that what Assad has done directly affects America's security. America's security. We have a huge national interest in containing

all weapons of mass destruction. And the use of gas is a weapon of mass destruction. Allowing those weapons to be used with impunity would be an enormous chink in our armor that we have built up over years against proliferation.

Think about it. Our own troops benefit from that prohibition against chemical weapons. I mentioned yesterday in the briefing, many of you were there, and some of you, I notice from decorations, otherwise, I know many of you have served in the military, some of you still in the Reserves. And you know the training that we used to go through with when you are, you know, learning. And I went to chemical/nuclear/biological warfare school, and I remember going in a room in a gas mask, and they make you take it off, and you see how long you can do it, and it ain't for long.

Those weapons have been outlawed, and our troops in all of the wars we have fought since World War I have never been subjected to it because we stand up for that prohibition. There is a reason for that.

If we don't answer Assad today, we will irreparably damage a century-old standard that has protected American troops in war. So to every one of your constituents, if they were to say to you, why would you vote for this even though we said we don't want to go war, because you want to protect American troops, because you want to protect America's prohibition and the world's prohibition against these weapons.

The stability of this region is also in our direct security interest. Our allies, our friends in Israel, Jordan and Turkey are, all of them, just a strong wind away from being injured themselves or potentially from a purposeful attack. Failure to act now will make this already volatile neighborhood even more combustible, and it will almost certainly pave the way for a more serious challenge in the future.

And you can just ask our friends in Israel or elsewhere; in Israel they can't get enough gas masks. And there is a reason that the Prime Minister has said this matters, this decision matters. It is called Iran. Iran looms out there with its nuclear program and the challenge we have been facing, and that moment is coming closer in terms of a decision. They are watching what we do here. They are watching what you do and whether or not this means something.

If we choose not to act, we will be sending a message to Iran of American ambivalence, American weakness. It will raise a question. I have heard this question. As Secretary of State, as I meet with people and they ask us about sort of our long-term interests in the future with respect to Iran, they have asked me many times, do you really mean what you say? Are you really going to do something? They ask whether or not the United States is committed, and they ask us also, if the President cuts a deal, will the Congress back it up? Can he deliver? This is all integrated.

I have no doubt, I talked to Prime Minister Netanyahu yesterday, Israel does not want to be in the middle of this, but we know that their security is at risk, and the region is at risk.

I also want to remind you, you have already spoken to this. Your word is on the line, too. You passed the Syria Accountability Act, and that act clearly states that Syria's chemical weapons threaten

the security of the Middle East. That is in plain writing. It is in the act. You voted for it. We have already decided these chemical weapons are important to the security of our Nation. I quote, "The national security interests of the United States are"—"the national security interests of the United States are at risk with the chemical weapons of Syria."

The fourth question I have been asked a lot of times is why diplomacy isn't changing this dynamic. Isn't there some alternative that could avoid this? And I want to emphasize on behalf of President Obama, President Obama's first priority throughout this process has been and is diplomacy. Diplomacy is our first resort. And we have brought this issue to the United Nations Security Council on many occasions. We have sent direct messages to Syria, and we have had Syria's allies bring them direct messages: Don't do this. Don't use these weapons. All to date to no avail.

In the last 3 years, Russia and China have vetoed three Security Council resolutions condemning the regime for inciting violence, or resolutions that simply promote a political solution to the dialogue, to the conflict. Russia has even blocked press releases, press releases, that do nothing more than express humanitarian concern for what is happening in Syria or merely condemned the generic use of chemical weapons, not even assigning blame. They have blocked them. We have brought these concerns to the United Nations, making a case to the members of the Security Council that protecting civilians, prohibiting the use of chemical weapons, and promoting peace and security are in our shared interests, and those general statements have been blocked.

That is why the President directed me to work with the Russians and the region's players to get a Geneva II peace negotiation under way. And the end to the conflict in Syria, we all emphasize today, is a political solution. None of us are coming to you today asking for a long-term military—I mean, some people think we ought to be, but we don't believe there is any military solution to what is happening in Syria. But make no mistake, no political solution will ever be achievable as long as Assad believes he can just gas his way out of this predicament.

We are without question building a coalition of support for this now. Thirty-one countries have signed on to the G20 [Group of 20] statement, which is a powerful one, endorsing the United States efforts to hold Assad accountable for what he is doing. Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, France, and many others are committed to joining with us in any action. We are now in the double digits with respect to countries that are prepared to actually take action should they be needed, were they capable of it.

I mentioned 31 nations signing on to the G12 [Group of 12] statement. But our diplomatic hand, my former colleagues, our diplomatic hand only becomes stronger if other countries know that America is speaking with a strong voice here, with one voice, and if we are stronger as a united Nation around this purpose. In order to speak with that voice, we need you, the Congress.

That is what the President did. Many of you said, please bring this to Congress. The President has done that. And he is bringing it to Congress with confidence that the Congress will want to join in an effort to uphold the word of the United States of America,

not just the President, but the United States of America, with respect to these weapons of mass destruction.

Now, I want to be crystal clear about something else. Some people want to do more in Syria. Some people are leery about doing anything at all. But one goal we ought to all be able to agree on is that chemical weapons cannot be under the control of a man so craven that he has repeatedly used those chemical weapons against his fellow Syrians, with the horrific results that all of us have been able to see.

Yesterday we challenged the regime to turn them over to the secure control of the international community so that they could be destroyed, and that, of course, would be the ultimate way to degrade and to deter Assad's arsenal, and it is the ideal way to take this weapon away from him. Assad's chief benefactor, the Russians, have responded by saying that they could come up with a proposal to do exactly that. And we have made it clear to them, I have in several conversations with Foreign Minister Lavrov, that this cannot be a process of delay, this cannot be a process of avoidance; it has to be real, has to be measurable, tangible. And it is exceedingly difficult, I want everybody here to know, to fulfill those conditions.

But we are waiting for that proposal, but we are not waiting for long. President Obama will take a hard look at it. But it has to be swift, it has to be real, it has to be verifiable. It cannot be a delaying tactic. And if the United Nations Security Council seeks to be the vehicle to make it happen, that cannot be allowed to simply become a debating society.

Now, many countries, many of you in the Congress, from those who wanted military action to those who were skeptical of military action, want to see if this idea could become a reality. But make no mistake, make no mistake about why this idea has any potential legs at all, and why it is that the Russians have reached out to the Syrians, and why the Syrians have initially suggested they might be interested.

A lot of people say that nothing focuses the mind like the prospect of a hanging. Well, it is the credible threat of force that has been on the table for these last weeks that has for the first time brought this regime to even acknowledge that they have a chemical weapons arsenal. And it is the threat of this force and our determination to hold Assad accountable that has motivated others to even talk about a real and credible international action that might have an impact.

So how do you maintain that pressure? We have to continue to show Syria, Russia, and the world that we are not going to fall for stalling tactics. If the challenge we laid down is going to have the potential to become a real proposal, it is only because of the threat of force that we are discussing today, and that threat is more compelling if Congress stands with the Commander in Chief.

Finally, let me just correct a common misperception. In my conversation with Steve Chabot earlier today, he mentioned this, I have heard it; I have talked with many of you, you have told me you hear it. The instant reaction of a lot of Americans—and I am completely sympathetic to it, I understand it, I know where it comes from, I only stopped sitting where you sit a few months ago, I know exactly what the feelings are—people don't want another

Iraq. None of us do. We don't want Afghanistan. But, Mr. Chairman, with all due respect, we can't make this decision based solely on the budget. We can't make this decision based solely on our wishes, on our feeling that we know we have been through the wringer for a while. We are the United States of America, and people look to us. They look to us for the meaning of our word, and they look to us for our values, in fact, being followed up by the imprint of action where that is necessary.

We are not talking about America going to war. President Obama is not asking for a declaration of war. We are not going to war. There will be no American boots on the ground. Let me repeat, no American boots will be on the ground. What we are talking about is a targeted, limited, but consequential action that will reinforce the prohibition against chemical weapons. And General Dempsey and Secretary Hagel will tell you how we can achieve that and their confidence in our ability to achieve that. We are talking about an action that will degrade Assad's capacity to use these weapons and to ensure that they do not proliferate. And with this authorization the President is asking for the power to make sure that the United States of America means what we say.

Mr. Chairman, Mr. Ranking Member, and members of this committee, I can say to you with absolute confidence the risk of not acting is much greater than the risk of acting. If we fail to act, Assad will believe that he has license to gas his own people again, and that license will turn prohibited weapons into tactical weapons. And General Dempsey can tell you about this. It would take an exception, a purposeful exception that has been in force since 1925, and make it the rule today. It would undermine our standing, degrade America's security and our credibility, and erode our strength in the world.

In a world of terrorists and extremists, we would choose to ignore those risks at our peril. We cannot afford to have chemical weapons transform into the new convenient weapon, the IED [improvised explosive device], the car bomb, the weapon of everyday use in this world. Neither our country nor our conscience can bear the costs of inaction, and that is why we have come before you at the instruction of the President to ask you to join us in this effort.

[The prepared statement of Secretary Kerry can be found in the Appendix on page 65.]

Secretary KERRY. Secretary Hagel.

STATEMENT OF HON. CHUCK HAGEL, SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

Secretary HAGEL. Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Smith, and members of the committee, the Department of Defense has responsibility to protect the national security interests of the United States, and General Dempsey and I take that responsibility very seriously. That is why I strongly support President Obama's decision to respond to the Assad regime's chemical weapons attack on its own people, a large-scale and heinous sarin gas assault on innocent civilians, including women and children.

I also wholeheartedly support the President's decision to seek congressional authorization for the use of force in Syria, and I believe Secretary Kerry outlined those reasons very clearly.

The President has made clear that it is in our country's national security interest to degrade Assad's chemical weapons capabilities and to deter him from using them again. As Secretary Kerry mentioned, yesterday we outlined a way to accomplish this objective and divert military action. It would require the Assad regime to swiftly turn its chemical weapons arsenal over to international control so it can be destroyed forever, as President Obama noted, in a verifiable manner.

All of us are hopeful that this option might be a real solution to this crisis, yet we must be very clear-eyed and ensure it is not a stalling tactic by Syria and its Russian patrons. And for this diplomatic option to have a chance of succeeding, the threat of a U.S. military action, the credible, real threat of U.S. military action, must continue as we are talking today and will continue to talk and discuss throughout the week.

It was the President's determination to hold Assad accountable and the fact that he put military action on the table that enabled this new diplomatic track to maybe gain some momentum and credibility. The support of Congress for holding Assad accountable will give even more energy and more urgency to these efforts.

So Congress has a responsibility to continue this important debate on authorizing the use of force against the Syrian regime. As each of us knows, committing our country to using military force is the most difficult decision leaders will make. All of those who are privileged to serve our Nation have a responsibility to ask the tough questions before that commitment is made. We must be able to assure the American people that their leaders are acting according to U.S. national interests with well-defined military objectives, and with an understanding of the risks and the consequences involved. The President and his entire national security team asked those difficult questions before we concluded that the United States should take military action against Syrian regime targets.

I want to address briefly how we reached this decision by clarifying the U.S. interests at stake here today and in the future, our military objectives, and the risks of not acting at this critical juncture.

As President Obama has said, the use of chemical weapons in Syria is not only an assault on humanity, it is a serious threat to America's national security interests and those of our closest allies. The Syrian regime's actions risk eroding the long-standing international norm against the use of chemical weapons, the norm that has helped protect the United States homeland and American forces operating across the globe from these terrible weapons.

The weakening of this norm has grave consequences for our troops, our country's future security, and for global stability. These weapons are profoundly destabilizing and have rightfully been rejected by the international community.

Syria's use of chemical weapons also threatens our friends and partners along its borders, including Israel and Jordan, Turkey, Lebanon, and Iraq. It increases the risks that terrorist groups like Hezbollah, which has forces in Syria supporting the Assad regime, could acquire chemical weapons and use them against our interests and our people.

We must do all we can to prevent Hezbollah or any terrorist group determined to strike the United States from acquiring chemical weapons, and we cannot allow terrorist groups in authoritarian regimes to mistakenly believe that they can use chemical weapons against U.S. troops or America's friends and partners in regions without severe consequences. Our allies throughout the world must be assured that the United States will stand by its security commitments and stand by its word.

Our adversaries must not believe that they can develop and use weapons of mass destruction without consequences. A world where these adversaries are emboldened instead of deterred is not the world that we want to live in, as President Obama said last week.

For example, North Korea, with its massive stockpile of chemical weapons, threatens our treaty ally the Republic of Korea; directly threatens the 28,000 U.S. troops stationed there on the DMZ [Demilitarized Zone]. During my recent trip to Asia, I had a very serious and long conversation with the South Korean defense minister about this real threat that North Korea's chemical weapons presents to them and to our troops.

Given these threats to our national security, the United States must demonstrate through our actions that the use of chemical weapons is unacceptable.

The President has made clear that our military objectives in Syria would be to hold the Assad regime accountable for its chemical weapons attack, degrade its ability to carry out these kinds of attacks, and deter the regime from further use of chemical weapons. The Department of Defense has developed military options to achieve these objectives, and we have positioned U.S. assets throughout the region to successfully execute the mission. We believe we can achieve them; we can achieve them with a military action that would be targeted, consequential, and limited.

General Dempsey and I have assured the President that U.S. forces will be ready to act whenever the President gives the order. We are working to build broad international support for this effort, as Secretary Kerry has noted. Last week at the G20, the leaders of a number of countries condemned this atrocity and called for a strong international response. In the days since, a number of other nations have also signed on to this statement, as Secretary Kerry has also noted.

In defining our military objectives, we have made clear that we are not seeking to resolve the underlying conflict in Syria through direct military force. We will not send America's sons and daughters to fight another country's civil war. We are not contemplating any kind of open-ended intervention or an operation involving American ground troops.

A political solution created by the Syrian people is the only way to ultimately end the violence in Syria, and Secretary Kerry is helping lead that international effort to help the parties in Syria move toward a negotiated transition. We have also expanded our assistance to the moderate Syrian opposition.

The military action we are contemplating will reinforce the larger strategy, strengthening diplomatic efforts, and making clear to Assad that he cannot achieve victory through further violence.

Having defined America's interests, our military objectives, we also must examine closely the risks and consequences. There are always risks in taking action, but there are also significant risks with inaction. The Assad regime, under increasing pressure from the Syrian opposition and with a massive arsenal of chemical weapons, could feel empowered to carry out even more devastating chemical weapons attacks. This would deepen the refugee crisis faced by Syria's neighbors and further destabilize the region.

A refusal to act would undermine the credibility of the United States, including the credibility of the President's commitment to prevent Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons.

The word of the United States must mean something. It is vital currency in foreign relations, in international and allied commitments. Every witness here today, Secretary Kerry, General Dempsey and myself, has served in uniform, fought in war, and we have seen its ugly realities up close, like many of you. We understand that a country faces few decisions as grave as using military force. We are not unaware of the costs and ravages of war. But we also understand that America must protect its people, and we must protect our national interests not just for the immediate, but for the future. That is our highest responsibility.

All of us who have the privilege and responsibility of serving this great Nation owe the American people, and especially those wearing the uniform of our country, a vigorous debate on how America should respond to the horrific chemical weapons attack in Syria. I know everyone on this committee agrees and takes the responsibility of office just as seriously as the President and everyone at this table does.

Mr. Chairman, thank you.

[The joint prepared statement of Secretary Hagel and General Dempsey can be found in the Appendix on page 71.]

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

General Dempsey.

STATEMENT OF GEN MARTIN DEMPSEY, USA, CHAIRMAN, JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF

General DEMPSEY. Chairman McKeon, Ranking Member Smith, members of the committee, thanks for the opportunity to share my perspective on the use of force in Syria. And let me also thank you for your service on this committee and the great support you provide to America's Armed Forces.

The President has made the determination that it is in our national interest to respond to Assad's use of chemical weapons with limited military force. We have reached the point at which Assad views chemical weapons as just another military tool in his arsenal, a tool he is willing to use indiscriminately, and that is what makes this so dangerous; dangerous for Syria, dangerous for the region, and dangerous for the world.

My role is to provide the President options about how we could employ military force. He has directed me to plan for a militarily significant strike that would do the following: deter the Assad's regime further use of chemical weapons and degrade the regime's military capability to employ chemical weapons in the future.

We have assembled target packages in line with those objectives. We have both an initial target set and subsequent target sets should they become necessary. The planned strikes will disrupt those parts of Assad's forces directly related to the chemical attack of 21 August; degrade his means of chemical weapons delivery; and finally, degrade the assets that Assad uses to threaten his neighbors and to defend his regime. Collectively such strikes will send Assad a deterrent message demonstrating our ability to hold at risk the capabilities he values most and to strike again, if necessary. United States military has forces ready to carry out the orders of the Commander in Chief.

The limited nature of these strikes seeks to mitigate the potential for a miscalculation and escalation, as well as minimize collateral damage; however, we are postured to address a range of contingencies, and we are prepared to support our friends in the region should Assad choose to retaliate.

I don't have to tell you this, but the men and women of America's Armed Forces are exceptionally well trained, and they are prepared. I am honored to represent them. If called to execute, your military will respond. And I stand ready to answer your questions.

[The joint prepared statement of General Dempsey and Secretary Hagel can be found in the Appendix on page 71.]

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much.

Secretary Kerry, last week before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and the House Foreign Affairs Committee, you testified that Congress had to act, had to vote in support of the authorization for the use of military force. Your testimony today no longer explicitly stated that.

Given Russia's proposal to put chemical weapons under international control and Assad's agreement to this proposal, has the administration's position on the AUMF [Authorization to Use Military Force] changed? Is the AUMF necessary? And will the President still seek a congressional vote on the AUMF?

Secretary KERRY. Chairman McKeon, again, as I said in my testimony, the President believes we need to keep this threat, this reality absolutely on the table. He wants the Congress to act. But I think that the Senate has made a decision to hold off to see whether there are any legs in this Russian proposal.

So we want you to act. We want this. There is no daylight with respect to the administration's commitment to keep moving with the Congress in the direction of securing this authorization, because we need to know that if this can't be performed, or this is a delay, or this is a game, or this is unreal, that we are speaking with one voice, and we are going to hold the Assad regime accountable.

So the answer is that the use of force absolutely should not be off the table. We are not asking Congress not to vote. But it may be, given what the Senate leader has decided, that we see if the Russians make a proposal in the next hours or not. That is up to the President to decide. Nothing has changed with respect to our request that the Congress take action with respect to this. As to when and how, that is something the President may want to chat with the leadership about.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

General Dempsey, you heard the concerns that I raised in my opening statement about committing our military to another mission, in this case a combat mission, without addressing the issue of sequestration and the associated readiness crisis. Would you agree that it is not possible to anticipate all of the second- and third-degree or third-order effects of military action, and, therefore, it is not possible to determine the final cost of a strike against Syria in terms of impacts to our combat readiness and the cost?

General DEMPSEY. Thanks, Chairman.

As you know, America is unmatched in our ability to employ military power. This is conceived as a limited operation and, therefore, well within our capability to conduct it.

I share your concern and have expressed it in this hearing room and elsewhere about the possibility that, due to sequestration, the force that sits behind the deployed force won't be ready. So I am concerned not about this operation, but in general, that unforeseen contingencies will be impacted in the future if sequestration continues.

The CHAIRMAN. I think Admiral Greenert pointed out last week that even having the destroyers there in the region and the cost of having the aircraft carrier task force, you know, we are talking maybe $30 million a week. These numbers add up, they are fungible, but the money has to be found somewhere. Generally what is happening is it is coming out of readiness and O&M [operations and maintenance].

General DEMPSEY. Chairman, could I add just for the entire committee's—just so you know, I share your concern completely with sequestration. I hope I have been clear about that. But we are talking about something here that we have articulated as in our national interest. And my assumption, and I hope you would agree, is that if something is in our national interest and we choose to act on it, that we can find the money to pay for it.

The CHAIRMAN. I have no question that you will find the money, General, it is just where do you find it, and does it deplete our readiness for other areas. We still are at war in Afghanistan; we still have troops over there that we need to see are adequately trained, those who are being deployed.

I have one other question. This talk of Russia and an international community coming in and taking charge and destroying the chemical weapons. I have heard in the past from our military leaders that this is a very expensive operation; that it would take troops on the ground, whoever provides them—United Nations or whoever provides them, there would have to be troops on the ground securing these weapons, and knowledgeable people, and the expense of destroying this. And I have heard whoever takes it over owns it. Is there any discussion who is going to pay for that?

Generally when the international community does something, we are the ones that end up paying for it. And I feel I have to keep bringing these issues up because I think, as I go out and see, talk to—visit bases and see the training that is going on and hear that, you know, we can't afford to cut the lawn, or we can't afford to fire our weapons as many times as we did last year in training, all of these things have an impact. And I know we have gone over this many hearings, and you have testified, General, of what impact

this is having. And we need to remind people of the $487 billion cuts before we even got to sequestration.

So it is not going away, and I think we need to be aware that that has to be a part of a consideration, as important as things are, that we also have to consider how we are going to pay for it and what other ramifications it has on our military.

Mr. Smith.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Secretary Kerry, I think in your opening remarks you talk about war-weariness. I think that misses the mark slightly in terms of what our concerns are. It is not so much the weariness of those wars, though certainly we are, it is the lessons that we should have learned or did learn from those wars, and the lessons about the limitation of American military power to fix problems in the world.

I mean, undeniably, Saddam Hussein was a problem in the Middle East. I mean, gosh, we had two no-fly zones, we had sanctions, we had all kinds of controversy in dealing with him. And you could easily imagine a better situation in Iraq than one that Saddam Hussein presented. But I think we learned that the ability of the U.S. military to simply come in there and create a better situation was limited, particularly if there is a lack of international support.

So I think the concern is not so much that we are weary of war, but what is the U.S. military response going to do to truly fix the situation in Syria? Can we pretty much unilaterally—yes, some other countries have expressed broad support. Virtually nobody at this point is stepping up, I think nobody actually is stepping up at this point to pony up any money or any resources or to put their—put their military on the line. So we are pretty much on our own. And I would just like you to talk a little bit about, do we understand the limitations of that?

One of the things as a policymaker that I was hoping that we could get to under President Obama is a more realistic explanation to the rest of the world of what we in the U.S. can and cannot fix, because the expectations out there in the world are off the charts. I was just in Jordan and Afghanistan and the UAE [United Arab Emirates], and I think there was this feeling that if anything happens in the world, it has to be the U.S.'s fault because we are powerful enough to fix it, and that is just not true. I would like to sort of downsize those expectations. And it is that limitation on military power that we are concerned about here.

And that brings me to the second part of the question. You know, if a leader uses chemical weapons, the obvious way to hold him accountable, first of all, would be it would be nice to build some international support, but, second of all, remove him from power, if that is what is done. And if you don't remove him from power, are you really holding him accountable? I think that is the other thing we are wrestling with. Now, you have, I think, articulated it fairly well, that we are trying to have a consequential, but limited strike. But does that truly hold—I mean, if he is still in power and he is still running the country, is he held accountable? How do we truly do that?

And then, lastly, we are rightly concerned about removing Assad from power because of the presence of Al Qaeda, because of the chaos that exists even now in Syria. Assad does not control the en-

tire country. How long will he control all of his chemical weapons dumps? And as bad as it is to have Assad in charge of them, I think you would agree it would be worse to have them scattered to whoever gets there first.

It is balancing all of that. And the feeling that I think some of us have is we are kind of like where we are taking a stick and hitting a hornet's nest with no intention whatsoever of killing the hornets. You know, we want to try to, I guess, teach them a lesson. But going forward, what comes next? Are we in a position to hold Assad accountable within all the limitations that we have talked about? I guess that is what we are concerned about.

Secretary KERRY. Adam, very good questions, and let me answer them in the whole.

This is not a piecemeal operation. It is not a piecemeal approach by the administration where one part is separate and being dealt with over here, and another part over here, although we are trying to separate the nature of the response to the degree that it is possible.

Now, let me be very specific about what I am saying. With respect to the limits of American power, obviously there have always been limits, and we haven't always heeded those lessons well before some of our most recent excursions. But I would say this: That lesson has particularly informed President Obama's decision and approach here.

The President is specifically not asking the Congress to empower him to go in and take over Syria's civil war, precisely because of those lessons. What the President is doing is making an informed decision about what the military can achieve and what we as a country need to achieve here, which is enforce a prohibition on the use of chemical weapons.

Now, he has directed the military to come up with a set of options as to how you can degrade his ability to deliver those weapons and send a sufficient message: Don't do it again. Now, we believe, and General Dempsey can testify to this, that he has arrived at a targeting concept that can achieve that.

Mr. SMITH. I am sorry. This is something that we tried to get in before. They launched these chemical weapons with artillery in many instances. And we are not going after the chemical weapons stockpiles themselves because that carries a whole lot of risk with it. So how exactly, General, are we going to degrade his ability to deliver chemical weapons——

Secretary KERRY. I want the general to speak to that, but I also want to answer the other part of your question, because it is important to understand it in a context here, because you asked a question about isn't the leader going to be left in power. Well, while it is not the primary objective of the strike, there clearly will be a downstream impact on his military capacity. And as everybody here knows, the President and the Congress have made a decision to support the opposition in certain ways, and that support is growing, and its impact is growing, and so there is a separate track whereby pressure will continue to be put on the Assad regime in order to do what? To bring him to the negotiating table to implement Geneva I.

Now, some people have said, well, there is no strategy here. There is a strategy. There has been a strategy in place for a long time, and that is to try to implement Geneva I, which was arrived at last year in June of 2012, where Russia signed on to a proposal that has a transition governing entity that would be created by mutual consent with the parties, with full executive authority, that will then set up the structure for the new Syria to be decided on by the Syrian people.

So that is the strategy. Now, how do you get there? I am telling everybody here, if Assad can gas his people with impunity, you will never get to Geneva, you will never have a negotiation if we don't stand up and take that weapon away, and this strike is calculated to send him the message you cannot use these chemical weapons without enormous cost.

Mr. SMITH. I am sorry, Mr. Secretary. I don't mean to be overbearing.

Secretary KERRY. That is all right.

Mr. SMITH. What if he can kill his people with impunity, whether he is using chemical weapons or not; does that not send the same lesson?

Secretary KERRY. Obviously, Adam, obviously. I mean, look, is there a difference between 100,000 people being killed by artillery and Scuds and napalm and other means? Of course there——

Mr. SMITH. That is not the question I am asking here. I am asking if the goal is to force him to negotiations, stopping him from using chemical weapons is an important piece.

Secretary KERRY. It is not the goal, it is the collateral impact of this is he can't use his chemical weapons, over time, with the opposition, his status deteriorates, and he comes to believe he has to negotiate. But this strike is not calculated to remove him, it is not calculated to be the game changer with respect to the whole field, it is calculated to stop him from using weapons that we decided in 1925 should not be used in war and represent a war crime.

And I think I should let the general speak as to how this is specifically targeted to do that, because I don't want any confusion that you are being asked to do something that is specifically geared towards getting involved in or taking over Syria's civil war. That is not the purpose of this strike. The purpose of the strike is limited and targeted. Some people want it to be more, but the President has decided that is inappropriate. He believes it ought to be targeted to prevent the chemical weapons. And I think the general should say why that is.

Mr. SMITH. General, just quickly, yield.

General DEMPSEY. Well, I will see if this answers your question. But, you know, we can't prevent him from using chemical weapons again. That is not possible under the current construct, and I am not sure it is possible short of him giving them up or someone seizing control of them.

We can deter, and we can degrade. Deter is changing his calculus about the cost of using them again, and degrade is literally taking away some of the capabilities, but not all, that he would use to deliver them. Now, these particular weapons were delivered not with artillery actually, but by improvised, short-range rockets.

So there are target packages that address the command and control, the decisionmaking apparatus; important to mention not to degrade the Syrians' ability to control the weapons and guard them, safeguard their security, but rather the command and control of those who chose to use them, the means of delivery, and some of the other resources that the regime uses to protect itself.

So, I mean, we have got a full range of options, but I will also say, importantly, the President has not yet given me the final decision on those target packages. We have got a range of options.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you very much.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. We are now going to open it up for members' questions. And I will enforce the 5-minute limit. We have just about the full committee here, and everybody has important questions to ask. So will you please respect the time for everybody equally.

Mr. Jones.

Mr. JONES. Mr. Chairman, thank you very much. And I would like to start my questioning by reminding this committee and the American people that on October the 23rd of 1983, 241 marines were blown apart at the barracks in Lebanon. And the reason I want to start with this is because I want to read one paragraph from President Reagan after the bombing. It is in the book called "The American Life: Autobiography of Ronald Reagan."

"In the weeks immediately after the bombing, I believed the last thing we should do was turn tail and leave. Yet the irrationality of Middle Eastern politics forced us to rethink our policy. If there would have been some rethinking of policy before our men died, we would be a lot better off. If that policy had changed towards more of a neutral position and neutrality, those 241 Marines would be alive today."

I thank Mr. Reagan for having the courage to look at the situation and to understand that the Middle East can be a jungle. That brings me to this point and my question. I represent the Third District of North Carolina, 60,000 retired military in the district, Camp Lejeune Marine base, Cherry Point Marine Air Station. And in 5 days we received over 415 telephone calls. We also received over a thousand emails in that same period of time. Ninety-seven percent said no to this action in Syria. I had even Marines to call from Camp Lejeune, did not identify themselves or their ranks, to say, please register me as a no in going into Syria.

So my question to all three of you, how will we determine that these strikes are successful? What contingency plans are in place if other countries take aggressive action as a result of our strikes? Do we really believe that Hezbollah, Iran, Russia will simply stand by and watch?

Those last two questions are very important to me as a Representative, but it is also very important to the thousands of people in the Third District of North Carolina. Let me repeat two of them very quickly. What contingency plans are in place if other countries take aggressive action as a result of our strikes? Do we believe that Hezbollah, Iran, Russia will simply stand by and watch? If you could answer those two questions.

And I have other questions, Mr. Chairman, I would like to submit in writing for the record, with a response back in writing. I ask unanimous consent.

The CHAIRMAN. Without objection.

Mr. JONES. If you gentleman could answer those two questions, I would be greatly appreciative.

Secretary KERRY. Go ahead, Marty, you want to talk about the deterrence?

General DEMPSEY. Yeah, I can talk about the risk. You are asking about the risk of retaliation, and specifically you are asking about Russia and Iran. And we assess that the risk of retaliation, because of the limited nature of this strike, is low. I can't drive it to zero. I can tell you that we are postured in the region in order to deal with any miscalculation or retaliation.

Mr. JONES. General, very quickly, innocent people will be killed. I mean, that is a given in war, I would believe. Innocent people in Syria will be killed. Is that an assumption that I can assume would be correct?

General DEMPSEY. You can make that assumption because war is an imperfect science, to be sure. But you can also be sure that part of the targeting criteria I have been given by the President is to achieve a collateral damage estimate of low, which is—I can talk to you in classified setting about what that means.

Mr. JONES. Mr. Secretary of Defense, would you answer the two questions? And then I would like the Secretary of State, if possible.

Secretary HAGEL. Congressman, first on your comments concerning your constituents, as well as General Dempsey and mine, the Marines, please don't let them send me to Syria, I believe was the paraphrase. First, I just want to remind everybody that is not the objective, that is not what is in the resolution of authorization, that is not why the President came to Congress. It is not about sending Marines to Syria.

Regarding your questions, as I said in my statement, Congressman, there are always risks and consequences to action. But I also said there are risks and consequences to no action. I believe, I believe as firmly as I am sitting here this morning, and I think I have some justification for believing this, that if no response from the international community occurs to what Assad has most recently done on August 21st, and other actions he has taken prior to that, he will do it again. We will be back here revisiting this issue at some point. And the next time we revisit this, it may well be about direct American casualties and the potential security of this country.

We have planned for, in every possible way, months of planning, Congressman, on the contingencies that you talked about, the what ifs, what ifs. Where are our assets deployed? Are we prepared? What are we anticipating? From the State Department security offices we spent days with Secretary Kerry's people on anticipating hits on our embassy, our consulate, our American interests around the world. There is no operation perfect. I can't guarantee anything. But I would leave it at that, Congressman. Thanks.

The CHAIRMAN. The gentleman's time has expired.

Ms. Sanchez.

Ms. SANCHEZ. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I have written my questions down because I have really thought a lot about every single word in these. And these two questions, or a set of questions I am going to ask, are for Secretary Kerry.

In articulating the basis for military action against Syria, the President and many in the administration have placed great emphasis on the moral and the legal dimensions of the issue. I believe you called the attack on civilians a moral obscenity, and one of the principal justifications has been the alleged violations of the laws of war for use by chemical weapons.

So I have two questions. Would you please define the circumstances in which you believe deliberate targeting of civilians will lead to an American intervention? Why not in every case? Why not in Homs, where thousands of civilians died and we did nothing? Is the U.S. or the Obama administration committing itself to military action in every case in the future where civilians are deliberately targeted in internal conflict or only when chemical weapons are used? That is the first one.

And secondly, do you agree enforcement of the chemical weapons ban and other violations of international law of war must comply with the fundamental framework of the U.N. [United Nations] Charter for use of military force between nations? Because that charter, which is a duly ratified treaty by the United States, prohibits use of armed force against other nations except with a U.N. Security Council resolution or where imminent national self-defense warrants military action. And self-defense, that basis must be imminent. And two permanent members are opposed—Russia and the U.K. [United Kingdom]—to this force. No one in the administration has argued that the United States is under imminent threat. In fact, last night the President seemed to say that we didn't have to so worry about Assad and his capabilities.

So can military action be legally justified under the U.N. Charter? And is enforcement of international law our responsibility even when we are not threatened and when the U.N. refuses to authorize force, even when it goes against our own law? And do you support vigilante action for other nations to enforce international law or just us?

Secretary KERRY. Terrific questions, and I will do my best to try to address them.

With respect to the deliberate targeting of civilians and so forth, I wish it were clear. I really do. As you all know, President Clinton wrote in his memoirs that his greatest regret in his Presidency was not responding to the slaughter that took place in Rwanda. But we did respond in Kosovo and Bosnia, and we responded without a U.N. resolution.

As you know, there has been a developing sort of theory that some people attach, we have not adopted it as a Nation, nor as an administration, with respect to the right to protect under certain circumstances. But NATO [North Atlantic Treaty Organization] did make a decision outside of the U.N.—with the U.N., U.N. actually did pass a resolution with respect to the situation of the civilians in Benghazi and the threat that they faced from Qadhafi, and the United States acted at that point in time.

I think that there is no hard and fast rule, but there are legal justifications under certain circumstances with respect to inter-

national treaties such as the international convention on weapons of mass destruction.

Ms. SANCHEZ. Secretary Kerry, don't you believe——

Secretary KERRY. The President is not making an argument. He is not coming——

Ms. SANCHEZ [continuing]. That the U.N. Charter takes more into account than a chemical weapons international law?

Secretary KERRY. Not always, unfortunately. I regret that the circumstances we find ourselves in are such that the three principal mechanisms for U.N. justification don't ideally fit this situation. It is just a reality. The President has acknowledged that. The President has nevertheless tried very hard to make the U.N. a primary focus of his efforts.

Ms. SANCHEZ. Has the President gone to the U.N. for a resolution on force?

Secretary KERRY. Yes, he has gone.

Ms. SANCHEZ. Gone to the U.N. for a resolution on force on this issue?

Secretary KERRY. At the very beginning, after this event took place, on the 28th, I believe it was around the 28th, there was a resolution that our Ambassador and the U.N. attempted to table, but we found that the Russians opposed it, the Chinese opposed it, and we couldn't move forward. The first one was just a general condemnation. Then we tried to get all means necessary. That was objected to. So that is when the President started to look elsewhere. It was a result of those resolutions being refused at the U.N.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Secretary, the gentlelady's time has expired.

Ms. SANCHEZ. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Could you please complete the answer for the record?

Secretary KERRY. Sure. I will be happy to.

[The information referred to was not available at the time of printing.]

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Forbes.

Mr. FORBES. Gentlemen, sometimes this business comes down to making tough choices. Thank you for helping us make those tough choices.

Secretary Kerry, you assured us that we were not going to war. But I think most of us sitting on this committee realize that if tomorrow a foreign country launches a barrage of Tomahawk missiles into Washington, DC, no matter what they called that, they have just gone to war with the United States of America. And I am afraid that some individuals in Syria may have a hard time discerning whether those missiles launched at them might constitute war as well.

But I do agree with you when you say we can't base our decision solely on the budget. So I want to take sequestration off the table and not even deal with sequestration.

Secretary Hagel, I want to ask you this. Which do you feel is more detrimental to the national defense of the United States of America? And I want to give you two choices. Choice one, failure to respond with an unbelievably small military response against Syria for using chemical weapons against its own people; or, choice number two, cutting $587 billion from our national defense, plan-

ning to cut 2 to 3 carrier strike groups, reducing our F–22 fleet to 187 fighters when the Air Force says we need 250, destroying 7 of our Navy cruisers, which have twice the firepower of the entire British Navy, creating a training crisis for our Air Force and a maintenance shortfall for our Navy ships, and doing away with the Joint Forces Command without any predecisional analysis? If you had to pick between those two as to which is more detrimental to national defense, would you pick choice number one or choice number two?

Secretary HAGEL. Well, Congressman, I hope those won't be the choices.

Mr. FORBES. They were the choices, because choice number two is what the administration did outside of sequestration. And so I just need you to give me a little perspective. If you had to pick one or the other, which would it be, more detrimental to the national defense of the country?

Secretary HAGEL. Well, again, I will answer your question, but let me just make one comment. I hope the Congress and the President will resolve the choice number two——

Mr. FORBES. That is not relating to sequestration, Mr. Secretary.

Secretary HAGEL. Well, it is.

Mr. FORBES. They were cuts that were made before sequestration.

Secretary HAGEL. You are talking about the $487 billion.

Mr. FORBES. $587 billion.

Secretary HAGEL. That wasn't just the President, that was the Congress as well.

Mr. FORBES. But the President proposed that he started with his efficiency. So if you would, I have only got 5 minutes.

Secretary HAGEL. The Congress—the Congress was a partner in that.

Mr. FORBES. I only have 5 minutes, just tell me which one is more detrimental.

Secretary HAGEL. Well, for the long-term interests of our country, to completely decimate the internal dynamics of our military structure and capability is obviously the longer term problem.

Mr. FORBES. So choice number two.

Secretary HAGEL. Yes, but that is not the issue at hand, Congressman. That is an interesting theoretical debate.

Mr. FORBES. Well, it is the issue, and I will come back to that.

Secretary Kerry, you talked about sending a greater message of national weakness. Which do you believe sends a greater message of national weakness: failure to respond with an unbelievably small military response against Syria for using chemical weapons against its own people or cutting $587 billion out of our national defense, planning to cut two to three carrier strike groups, reducing our F–22 fleet, and destroying seven Navy cruisers, which have twice the firepower of the British Navy. Which one sends the stronger message of national weakness?

Secretary KERRY. Well, those aren't the choices on the table as far as I am concerned.

Mr. FORBES. I know. That is not my question. My question is which——

Secretary KERRY. Well, that is relevant to what we are doing here, Congressman. We are trying to figure out whether or not we are going to proceed forward with a resolution of authority.

Mr. FORBES. Mr. Secretary——

Secretary KERRY. Your budget question—this is not a budget hearing.

Mr. FORBES. Mr. Secretary, let me take that back then because you are not going to answer my question.

Secretary KERRY. No, I am going to answer it.

Mr. FORBES. Chairman Dempsey said this——

Secretary KERRY. I am going to tell you what I think we ought to do.

Mr. FORBES. I will let you respond in writing.

[The information referred to was not available at the time of printing.]

Mr. FORBES. Secretary Dempsey said if we need the money we will find the money if it is of interest. And my point is we have been waiting, Mr. Secretary, I have been waiting for you to come back and pound your fist on the table just as strong as you are talking about advocating this military strike to say why haven't we put that $587 billion back which shouldn't impact sequestration? Why are we even talking about cutting two to three carrier strike groups? Why have we reduced our F–22s down? And I haven't heard that same kind of passion.

And, Mr. Secretary Kerry, the reason that is relevant is because I am hearing from veterans groups, defense industry, ordinary citizens who do think that is a valid question for us to have been asking. And it comes down to this. This administration loves to use the military, want to use it in Syria, Libya, resource to Asia to balance that pivot, the Afghanistan surge. You just don't want to pay the price it takes to have a strong military.

Secretary KERRY. Congressman, Congressman——

Mr. FORBES. And my final question, Mr. Secretary, and you can answer after that, are you officially withdrawing your request for us to take action on a military response immediately? And do you want us to delay that response?

Secretary KERRY. I am not officially asking you to withdraw it, no, and I am not asking delay. But I have been informed that the President of the United States, while we have been sitting here, which I knew was going to take place this morning, has completed a conversation with President Hollande and with Prime Minister Cameron. I had an earlier conversation this morning with Foreign Minister Fabius, and we talked about where we are with respect to the Russian proposal. And they agreed to work closely together, in consultation with Russia and China, to explore the viability of the Russian proposal——

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Secretary——

Secretary KERRY [continuing]. And to put all of the Syrian CW [chemical weapons] under the control of a verifiable destruction enforcement mechanism. And efforts are going to begin today to do that.

Now, I don't know if that affects it, but I am not here to ask you, no. I think we need to, as I said in my opening statement as forcefully as I can, what has brought us to this discussion at the U.N.

now is the potential of this force, and we don't want to take it off the table. It would be dangerous to do that. It would be sucked into something that may not have any capacity to be able to be effective.

And with respect to the budget, Mr. Chairman, a point of personal privilege here, please. We are all concerned. I am concerned. I am not politics now, I am out of politics. But I spent 28 years up here, and I know what is going on. We are all concerned about the readiness of our military, and I hear it in different places. But everybody knows that this Nation is wealthy enough and has the capacity, if Congress will make its decision on the budget as a broad basis, to fund what we need to fund.

Mr. FORBES. Mr. Secretary, you voted to cut that $587 billion.

With that, Mr. Chairman, I yield.

Secretary KERRY. No, I voted to put in place a reasonable mechanism that would actually wind up with us solving our budget and deficit problems. And it was never put in place. That is what I voted for.

The CHAIRMAN. Okay. I am going to go back to what I said. I am going to enforce the 5 minutes. So if you want a question answered, leave enough time for the answer. If you just want to make a point, make the point. That is fine. Take the whole 5 minutes. But I will cut it off at 5 minutes for the next person.

Mr. Andrews.

Mr. ANDREWS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Secretary Kerry, we also received in the last 10 minutes the news you just made reference to, that efforts, according to the President, will begin today at the U.N. and include discussion of a potential Security Council resolution on this international disarmament proposal. I think there is broad support to try to make that happen. I agree with your assessment that absent a credible threat it would not have happened. I think that is a very good observation.

You said earlier in your testimony that this proposal has to be real and verifiable. What criteria are we going to use to evaluate whether this proposal is real and verifiable?

Secretary KERRY. Well, we are just getting to that process. We have been discussing this actually for the last several days. Our experts are working on exactly what would be required. It is the judgment of the Intelligence Community most of the weapons of mass destruction/chemical weapons are in the control of the regime, obviously. They have about 1,000 metric tons of numerous chemical agents, binary components, including finished sulfur, mustard, binary components for sarin and VX. Most of that is in the form of unmixed binary components, probably stored mostly in tanks. But they also possess sarin-filled munitions and other things we can't go into here. We are going to have to be able to know that it can all be accounted for and actually moved under the circumstances that exist in Syria to a place where they can be taken out and destroyed.

Mr. ANDREWS. Could any of the three of you describe the practical issues involving the safety of the personnel who would be performing the tasks that Secretary Kerry just talked about, be they international——

Secretary KERRY. That is a huge issue.

Mr. ANDREWS. What is necessary to take place among the warring factions in Syria for that to be a viable and practical option?

Secretary KERRY. Well, the one benefit of the fact that they have been trying to deny that they control, that the regime controls most of these weapons, and as the war has progressed and opposition has taken over one particular territory or another, we know they have moved these munitions into their more safely controlled area. That is a virtue of the way they have tried to manage their weapons program.

Mr. ANDREWS. Right.

Secretary KERRY. So that is now in regime-controlled territory. Therefore, it is our belief—and this is all initial, I don't want to go into a lot of detail because it is so initial——

Mr. ANDREWS. Right.

Secretary KERRY [continuing]. That the majority, if not all of it, is in area controlled by the Assad forces, and therefore if they are going to make good on this they ought to be able to make good on the protection of the process itself. Now, these are things that are going to have to be—these are the modalities that are all going to have to be worked out, negotiated in very short order because the President, appropriately, is not going to allow some nickel and diming long process to draw this out while he continues to prosecute——

Mr. ANDREWS. I think it is also important to put this diplomatic discussion in context. This is not a proposal that just sort of spontaneously combusted. I know that you and your predecessor have tried for 2½ years to enter into good faith negotiations with the Syrians, both directly, through their allies and through international organizations. And could you just briefly summarize that 2½-year effort that has brought us to this point?

Secretary KERRY. Well, the Assad regime has until now denied that they even have the weapons. So there has been no discussion fundamentally about how you do it, though it has been suggested and talked about to some degree. And as I said, I had some conversations about this with my counterpart from Russia last week. President Putin raised the issue with President Obama at St. Petersburg. President Obama directed us to try to continue to talk and see if it is possible.

So it is not something that, you know, suddenly emerged, though it did publicly. But it cannot be allowed to be a delay. And the only reason it is on the table today, the only reason the Assad regime has even publicly apparently consented to the Russians that they would be willing to do something, having never admitted they had these weapons, is because this threat of force is in front of them.

Mr. ANDREWS. I think we all wish you great success in achieving a successful resolution of this effort.

And I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Miller.

Mr. MILLER. Secretary Kerry, you just said again there should be no delay. Is that correct?

Secretary KERRY. Well, I mean there has to be a reasonable period to try to work this out, obviously. You have got to see whether

or not this has any meat to it. And if it does have meat, I think that is important.

Mr. MILLER. So, again, following up on Mr. Forbes'——

Secretary KERRY. The Senate has already delayed.

Mr. MILLER. Because they don't have the votes, Mr. Secretary. That is why they delayed. You know that.

Secretary KERRY. Actually, no, I don't.

Mr. MILLER. Well, I do.

Secretary KERRY. Well, I am glad you know something. And I think this is not a, you know, this should not be a political discussion about whether there are votes or not.

Mr. MILLER. I am not being political, Mr. Secretary. It is the truth. They don't have the votes. Read any newspaper in this country and you will find that out.

Secretary KERRY. As I said to you, I don't know that.

Mr. MILLER. Should the House delay or should the House move forward?

Secretary KERRY. I believe that the Senate has made——

Mr. MILLER. This is the House of Representatives, not the Senate, sir.

Secretary KERRY. I understand. Look, do you want to play politics here or do you want to get a policy in place? The policy that can be put in place is to try to get this particular option of getting control of chemical weapons in place. Now, if you want to undermine that, then play the politics.

Mr. MILLER. Okay. How about this, Mr. Secretary——

Secretary KERRY. If you want it to work, then I am asking you to be serious about how we got here.

Mr. MILLER. Explain to me, Mr. Secretary—reclaiming my time, sir.

Mr. Chairman, would you please ask the witnesses to limit their answers to the questions that are asked?

Mr. Secretary, would you please explain what an incredibly small strike is?

Secretary KERRY. It is not Iraq, it is not Iran, it is not a year's war. What I was doing was trying to point out to people that we are engaged in a strike which we have again and again, and if you want to take my comments in their entirety, I have said this will be meaningful, it will be serious, the Assad regime will feel it because it will degrade their military capacity. But compared to Iraq, Kosovo, Libya, it is small. It is not any of those things. That doesn't mean that it would be anything less than what I have suggested previously, and the military has suggested that Assad will know. We don't do pin pricks. The President has said that, and we have said that. We will degrade, and I believe we will deter. But it is not Iraq, Afghanistan. And compared to them, it is small.

Mr. MILLER. Has Assad directly threatened the United States of America?

Secretary KERRY. Chemical weapons directly threaten the United States of America. The instability of the Middle East directly——

Mr. MILLER. Mr. Secretary, are we going to strike North Korea?

Secretary KERRY. Not at the current moment, obviously.

Mr. MILLER. They have a larger stockpile than Syria has.

Secretary KERRY. I beg your pardon?

Mr. MILLER. Do they not have a larger stockpile than Syria?

Secretary KERRY. They have one of the largest stockpiles in the world. And we are currently engaged in a very serious effort, which I think you are aware of, working with the Chinese. I went, at the President's direction——

Mr. MILLER. I appreciate—let me——

Secretary KERRY. But you don't really want answers, do you?

Mr. MILLER. I am limited on my time, but you are not, sir.

Secretary KERRY. I am trying to give you an answer.

Mr. MILLER. This is not the Senate. We do not filibuster here.

Secretary KERRY. I am trying to give you an answer.

Mr. MILLER. General, has Assad attacked any of our allies?

General DEMPSEY. Not to my knowledge.

Mr. MILLER. To anybody at this desk, whose side are we on?

Secretary KERRY. With respect to?

Mr. MILLER. Syria, Mr. Secretary.

Secretary KERRY. We are supporting the opposition.

Mr. MILLER. Which opposition?

Secretary KERRY. We are supporting the moderate opposition of General Idris and the SMC [Supreme Military Council] and of President Jarba and the Syrian opposition.

Mr. MILLER. And I believe you just referred to the fact that this Congress supported doing things with the Syrian opposition. Is that correct?

Secretary KERRY. We are helping the Syrian opposition, and the President has made that clear.

Mr. MILLER. You said this Congress voted to support that. Is that correct?

Secretary KERRY. I said Congress has authorized us to do some things to support them.

Mr. MILLER. Let me make the record perfectly clear. I voted no. I had a vote, and I voted no.

Secretary KERRY. I am happy to have the record be made clear, Congressman.

Mr. MILLER. Thank you.

Yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. Ms. Davis.

Mrs. DAVIS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you to all of you for being here.

I know you have made several attempts at this, but I am wondering, because the American people are interested in watching, could you articulate further and is there anything that you haven't said that would better suggest why American interests are at stake? What else can you tell the American people that perhaps you feel you haven't had time to do?

Secretary KERRY. Well, I think in my opening statement I laid it out, so I am very grateful for the time to have been able to do that, and I appreciate the indulgence of the committee. I don't want to repeat all of it. But there is no question in our mind that if the United States of America cannot stand up and make real what we have said with respect to the prohibition on the use of chemical weapons against innocent civilians, that we then open Pandora's box for its use not only by Assad in the days ahead, but others who will begin to use it, as General Dempsey has said, as

an everyday tool. That will have been an enormous breach of nearly 100 years of the belief these weapons shouldn't be used in that form or in any form ever. And it is because of their indiscriminateness. Artillery is targeted, it kills, yes. But gas has the ability in much greater numbers to kill many more people and be much more dangerous and we need to stand against it.

We also know that our friends in Israel, in Jordan, in Lebanon, in Turkey, in Iraq are all deeply affected by the potential of this weapon gaining greater usage. And the instability that will be bred by the unwillingness of the United States to stand up against this will have repercussions as to who some people choose to support in this fight in Syria and could in fact significantly increase the amount of support going to the terrorists, to the worst elements, because they will be viewed then as the ones most committed to getting rid of Assad.

Mrs. DAVIS. Mr. Secretary, of course, and to the others, I mean there have been times when we have not acted in that way. People have wondered whether had the President not mentioned or spoke to a red line would we still be in this place today.

Secretary KERRY. Well, Congresswoman, thank you for the question. You know, there has been a lot that has tried to be made politically of the President calling it a red line. But the President didn't create this red line. This is a red line that a Republican or Democrat President would—or should enforce. And through years of effort, Republican and Democrat administrations alike, without regard to politics, have helped to advance the effort to get the world rid of weapons of mass destruction, chemical, biological, and nuclear.

And this is one of those three great weapons that the world has decided stand apart from other weapons. Not that we don't want to work in other ways to reduce the number of civilians killed, but this particular weapon has a special meaning in the context of war and the threats we face today.

Mrs. DAVIS. Thank you. I wanted to just follow up quickly, because I think everybody here is very concerned, and we want to move forward with what we have heard possibly is progress in the discussions that are coming up, certainly as it relates to Russia and other interested parties in this conflict.

I am wondering if, short of backing off of this, is there a resolution that you think could be entertained that would enumerate the what ifs, if in fact we are not able to move forward and get that kind of resolution? Is there anything, any way that we ought to be speaking out on the options that we have if that does not occur? And I would include cyber within that discussion as well. What would it look like if the Congress were to have a resolution that would basically say, in the absence of, this is where we go at this point in time? I know the Senate is looking at that.

Secretary KERRY. Sure. Congresswoman, I have no question, having great faith in the ability of Congress to come together around the wordsmithing necessary to come up with a resolution, yes. My answer would be of course there is the ability to be able to mold a resolution that has contingencies or places an appropriate approach to this. And that is within the purview of the Congress. And we are prepared to work with Congress very closely to achieve that.

I might just, in answer to the Congressman earlier about the question of North Korea, you know, the real difference here is that Syria has used these weapons, and they have done so after being repeatedly warned not to. So that is again what makes this even more compelling.

The CHAIRMAN. The gentlelady's time has expired.

Mr. Wilson.

Mr. WILSON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Chairman McKeon, for your leadership promoting peace through strength.

And I appreciate the panel being here today. I am a 31-year veteran of the Army National Guard Reserves, but I am particularly grateful to be the dad of four sons currently serving in the military of the United States. That is why I am so concerned about the confused policies of this administration, the ever-changing policies, the ambivalence, the uncertain red lines. The administration I think is giving a projection of weakness that puts the American people at risk. Additionally, the White House claimed chemical warfare by Syria on April the 25th, not August, April 25th, but failed to act.

Secretary Hagel, will a military strike by the United States against Syria cause a dramatic increase of refugees seeking asylum in Jordan? Could a sudden increase in the number of refugees threaten the Government of Jordan? Do we have plans to help Jordan absorb the refugees?

Secretary HAGEL. Congressman, thank you for your service, and obviously your sons' service, which we have had that discussion previously.

First, there are now more than 2 million refugees that have fled Syria. So that is a real issue now. Half a million in Jordan now, Turkey, Iraq. So we have got a huge problem now.

As to your specific question, would a limited, defined-scope attack on Assad's chemical weapons capabilities produce more refugees? We have looked at the different contingencies, reactions, possibilities of the kind of strikes that we are talking about, the options that we have given to the President. I think it is very unlikely that you would see any increase in refugees because of the nature of the kinds of very precise strikes that we are talking about.

Mr. WILSON. Well, again, the stability of Jordan is crucial to America and our allies.

Secretary HAGEL. Yes.

Mr. WILSON. And I certainly hope planning is in place.

Additionally, I understand the President has said that the objective is not regime change, but he has also said no boots on the ground. However, there are always unforeseen circumstances, such as if Assad were to lose power wouldn't it be necessary to place troops there to secure the chemical weapons?

Secretary HAGEL. Well, that is another contingency that we have obviously spent a lot of time looking at. That is one of the reasons, as was noted here earlier this morning, that in that group of options the strike of a chemical weapons munitions facility would be off limits for obvious reasons.

As to your question, what would happen if Assad's government goes down in the eventuality of a loss of control of those chemical weapons facilities, we are working, and have been working, coordinating very closely with all of Syria's neighbors on this particular

issue, Turkey, Jordan, Iraq, Israel, Saudi Arabia. And, yes, we are always looking at those options as to how we would respond, what we would do, what we would have to do.

Secretary KERRY. Congressman, could I just add to that that this is specifically geared not to raise the risk of losing control over those. And secondly, there will be no boots on the ground in this operation. There should be no confusion. So if something occurs down the road, the President would have to come back to you. He would have to come back.

Mr. WILSON. With so many different competing groups, and we know Al Qaeda is involved, I don't see how it could be guaranteed that there wouldn't be a real potential for terrorists, international terrorists to achieve chemical weapons.

Another concern I have, the limited strike, wouldn't Russia be able to immediately resupply the Syrian regime? And additionally, we now know that the Russian fleet in the Mediterranean is the largest since the Soviet dissolution. Is there a potential of conflict with the Russian Federation?

General DEMPSEY. Yeah. In the time remaining, there is always the possibility that Syria's allies would seek to replenish. But it would take longer than they assess at this point. And in terms of the fleet in the eastern Med, they have been building that up even before this recent spike in activity. And their fleet there at this point is mostly amphibs and intel ships.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Larsen.

Mr. LARSEN. Thank you.

General, welcome to the House of Representatives circa 2013. We don't filibuster around here, but we do have a different name for it. But I will try to be quick here.

It was actually Charles W. Warner and not Mark Twain who said that everyone talks about the weather, but no one does anything about it. And it seems that we are in that position on chemical weapons, where we are talking about what we ought do about chemical weapons, but we are, at least in the House and perhaps in the Senate, not willing to do much, if anything about it, or we are trying to explore what to do about it.

And I think what I want to hear first from Secretary Kerry is kind of what we are going to do about this Russian initiative if it goes to the U.N. Security Council. Is it going to focus, is our position going to focus on the chemical weapons only, getting those under control, and leaving production capability within Syrian hands, command and control in Syrian hands? Or are we going to try to broaden this a little bit more than just focusing on chemical weapons? Are we going to do something about that?

Secretary KERRY. We are going to do something about it. And that is why I am very careful to make certain that I don't overhype or present what is possible from it because we don't know yet. We need to explore this. We are looking at it on our side. The Russians are supposed to make a proposal to us. I will actually be talking to Secretary Lavrov after I leave here. And we are talking about it at the State Department and the White House to determine exactly what will produce the result we want. What guarantees that you have got the weapons, you have got all the weapons, that they

are accountable, that they are out, and that you can manage this under the circumstances that exist there.

Now, those are all the things that have to be gamed and vetted in full, and I don't want to make any predeterminations about that that could falsely raise expectations or, you know, leave something out that ought to be in there. I just think we need to let this fill out a little bit, it needs a little time.

Mr. LARSEN. My point is it gets beyond the actual weapons themselves because it was just apparently today that Syria, or yesterday——

Secretary KERRY. Well, we are currently talking about more than just that.

Mr. LARSEN. Yeah, exactly, I just want to make sure we are talking about production capability, and perhaps command and control, disaggregating that organization there.

For General Dempsey, Mr. Wilson talked about the humanitarian refugee crisis, how that might be added to from a strike. But can you talk a little bit about what your assessment, or to the extent you can here, are planning with regards to retaliation or response from Iran or Hezbollah as a result of strikes?

General DEMPSEY. Well, without being specific, as you know, we have mutual defense agreements with Turkey, through NATO, with Jordan directly, and of course with Israel. And we have got forces and personnel who at times like this establish crisis coordination mechanisms. We have got personnel in those three countries doing exactly that.

We have also, both because of the current tension with Syria, but also the fact that the 9/11 anniversary will be here tomorrow, we have also got forces at heightened states of alert and readiness throughout the region.

Mr. LARSEN. You know what, that is good enough for me for now. Thanks. Yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Mr. Turner.

Mr. TURNER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have one question for Secretary Hagel and two for Secretary Kerry.

Secretary Hagel, in my congressional district is Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, where as a result of the President's sequestration, which I opposed, over 12,000 people were furloughed. I have met with some of those people. They have difficulty making house payments, support for their children, car payments. They were concerned about their finances.

With the President's sequestration, basically they were told that the Department of Defense did not have enough money to pay them. And yet now the Department of Defense is telling the American public that it has enough money to take us into this conflict in Syria. How do you explain that to those people who lost wages and are facing the prospect of losing wages again in 2014 due to the President's sequestration?

Secretary HAGEL. Well, first, I have made my position known very clearly on sequestration, and I have restated it here, so I don't think I need to address that again. It is irresponsible. It produces exactly what happened on furloughs. And the decisions we are having to make now we will have to continue to make if sequestration

continues as it is the law of the land, because the Congress and the President agreed to that as a mechanism.

That said, to your specific point, as you also know, that we took 5 of those previously announced furlough days back, because of really focusing on where we could find the money to essentially improve our operations. We took that money out of——

Mr. TURNER. But, Mr. Secretary, you understand that they don't understand how it is that you would not have enough money to pay them, but yet you have enough money to take us into a conflict with Syria.

Secretary HAGEL. Well, I am going to get, if you allow me to get to the second part of the answer. It is important everybody understand that issue about the furlough. So we took 5 of those furlough days back because through a lot of very astute management—and robbing from our future readiness, by the way, to get that.

Now, your question. If in fact there is a strike in Syria, it is now the middle of September. We go into another fiscal year in about 2 weeks. So a significant amount of the cost of that strike, obviously anything that goes beyond October 1st would be in fiscal year 2014.

Mr. TURNER. Which currently is subject to sequestration.

Secretary HAGEL. I am sorry?

Mr. TURNER. Which currently is subject to sequestration.

Secretary HAGEL. Well, everything is subject to sequestration. But you asked a specific question about furloughs——

Mr. TURNER. You said you are going to take it out of next year. But again, to say to those people who are not getting paid and having their pay reduced, you know, they are looking at sequestration stopping in 2014 because the President has no proposal on the table, no leadership whatsoever on——

Secretary HAGEL. Well, that is not true. He does have a proposal on the table, and I introduced it. But if you want to get into the budget debate about that we can. But he does have a proposal on the table.

I would also answer your question this way. The national security interests probably trump budgets. That is up to the Congress to decide that. I think that is important. No one anticipated this. We were trying to plan as best we could to take down another $32 billion in the fiscal year that we are still in, anticipating taking another $52 billion next fiscal year.

Mr. TURNER. Secretary Hagel, thank you. I don't think anybody quite understands your answer, but I appreciate it. Secretary Kerry——

Secretary HAGEL. Glad to write it out for you, Congressman.

Mr. TURNER. Thank you. That I would appreciate.

[The information referred to was not available at the time of printing.]

Mr. TURNER. You keep citing the Syria Accountability and Lebanese Sovereignty Restoration Act of 2003. You did in your opening comments, it is in the President's proposal for military action. Most of the people in this room weren't in Congress in 2003. This act was about Syria occupying Lebanese territory. It was about Iraq, support for terrorism, and weapons of mass destruction. But it was a sanctions bill. It wasn't authorization for military action. But in-

terestingly enough, it included a provision requiring that the State Department notify Congress every year about where Syria is on weapons of mass destruction. Here is the report that the State Department delivered July 9th. I am going to ask this to be entered in the record.

[The information referred to can be found in the Appendix on page 81.]

Mr. TURNER. It includes this statement: "Our Intelligence Community has assessed with varying degrees of confidence that the Syrian regime has used these weapons"—meaning chemical weapons—"on a small scale in Syria, specifically the chemical agent sarin." This was July, so this must have been sometime in June the State Department was concluding this. We know that allegedly Saddam Hussein used chemical weapons previously on the Kurds. You have said there is a century-old standard, that we must take military action or there will be, you know, rampant use of chemical weapons. Clearly, there have been chemical weapons that have been used during that century-old standard that you have said was in place, but yet no military action occurred. Why is this different?

Secretary KERRY. Well, it is very different, and it is a good question. It is different because, first of all, the President was not racing to try to use a military action. But he——

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Secretary, would you please answer that for the record? His time has expired.

Secretary KERRY. Yes, sir. Absolutely, Mr. Chairman.

[The information referred to was not available at the time of printing.]

The CHAIRMAN. Ms. Bordallo.

Ms. BORDALLO. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for holding this hearing.

And thank you, Secretary Kerry, Secretary Hagel, and General Dempsey, for your continued efforts to inform Congress on the current situation in Syria. We all do appreciate it.

I am supportive of limited military intervention against Syria. I am deeply concerned that a lack of a U.S. response has profound impacts not only to countries in the Middle East, but also to our allies in other regions of the world.

Secretary Kerry, if Congress fails to act on authorizing some level of military force, what impact do you see with our allies in other regions of the world? And in particular I am concerned about the Asia-Pacific area.

Secretary KERRY. Well, I know for a fact, Congresswoman—thank you, and thank you very much for the support for the President's proposal—we are very, very concerned that with respect to our current efforts to deal with Iran, the President has made it clear that while he doesn't ever want—his first preference is a diplomatic solution. But if he can't get a diplomatic solution, and we cannot stop the march towards a nuclear weapon, the President has made it clear that he is prepared to do what is necessary to stop them.

That word, that promise, which is critical, would be at risk if this promise is put at risk because the Congress doesn't support it. Now, as I said earlier, this is not the President's sole statement. This is something that people have adopted over a period of time.

But, you know, this isn't anything different, frankly, colleagues, from the way things work in Congress. You know, when I was here your word was everything. If you gave your word to somebody that you would be with them, that was enough. That is the way you operated. And if somebody broke that, you would never trust them again. You wouldn't use them as your cosponsor, or you wouldn't work with them on the bill. That is critical.

And that is just the same in international relations. Our friends in the region, Israel, the Jordanians, the Lebanese, and others who are all at risk from what is happening there, are looking to see whether or not we will stand behind them, our values, our interests, and the words we have pronounced with respect to all of those three. And that is what is at stake here.

Ms. BORDALLO. Thank you. I also, you know, I am heartened to see developments in working out a possible solution with Russia that would entail removing chemical weapons from Syria. If it depends on honesty, I am not so sure this proposal would ever materialize. And I do realize, Mr. Secretaries and General Dempsey, that we certainly, the effects if we don't go through with something here, is going to be devastating to our country and our Nation. Our image throughout the world will—I can just imagine how they are looking at us already as we are debating this issue. So, again, I just want to say that I am standing behind the President's solution to this matter, whatever comes out, whether it is the Russian proposal or if we go ahead with the Obama proposal. And I thank you very much.

Secretary KERRY. Thank you very much, Congresswoman. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Mr. Scott.

Mr. SCOTT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Secretary Hagel, I was going to ask if you thought that the sequester cuts and the other cuts were degrading our military strength, but I think you already gave that answer. It is decimating the internal structure of our military. Is that correct?

Secretary HAGEL. Congressman, I have said that many times, that you can't have the kind of deep, abrupt cuts that we are experiencing and continue to have those, with the uncertainty of planning, without having an effect on our readiness and our future capabilities, yes.

Mr. SCOTT. I agree with you. And therefore it is a threat to our national security.

Secretary HAGEL. Yes, it is.

Mr. SCOTT. Thank you. I have listened, and, General Dempsey, I know you indicated that the threat to our national security was essentially that if we don't stop him he will do it again and that others may follow suit. Is that what you believe the threat to our national security is?

General DEMPSEY. Yes. Generally speaking, I mean to the other—to the Congressman, what is different this time? It is the scope, the scale really of the use, the use of it to clear a neighborhood, which indicates that it has gone from being a small-scale use that was used to terrorize to a large-scale use that is now indis-

criminate. And if that becomes a global norm, I think we are at great risk.

Mr. SCOTT. I guess I respectfully disagree with that assessment, that that is a threat to national security. But if he has 1,000 metric tons, and, Secretary Kerry, that is the number that you just said a minute ago, that would be 2.2 million pounds. Is that correct?

General DEMPSEY. Well, I am actually an English major, but I will take your word for that.

Mr. SCOTT. It is 2.2 million pounds. And if he had delivered 500 pounds 20 times, and he has not delivered that much, that would be 10,000 pounds of 2.2 million potential pounds of chemical weapons. I mean, some of us have legitimate concerns. I mean, only a small fraction of what he has has been used. And my concern, as I hear about a limited military strike, is I go back to when the President said that Assad must go in 2011. We have heard the administration talk about the need to move him out. We have heard them talking about changing the ground game. Now, these comments have been made in the past prior to this August.

I guess my concern now is that we are sitting here talking about going to war—some would say it is not a war, I believe it is—most of the time when a leader decides to go to war they use a doctrine and they follow certain principles on whether or not it is or is not justified. Colin Powell's doctrine had seven principles. Were there clear and obtainable objectives? Have risk and cost been fully analyzed? Have all other policy means been fully exhausted? Is there a plausible exit strategy? Have the consequences been fully considered? Is the action supported by the American people? Do we have broad international support?

Secretary Kerry, my question for you as a representative of the administration is would you list for us the principles of the doctrine that President Obama uses in making a decision whether or not to go to war?

Secretary KERRY. Well, how much time do I have?

The CHAIRMAN. One minute, 35 seconds.

Secretary KERRY. I think the President has great respect for Colin Powell. And so do I. And I was always impressed by the principles that he laid out. But I found that not every single situation, unfortunately, always lends itself to that. There are occasions where the President has to make a decision that may or may not have broad support or may not have exhausted all the remedies simply because of the timeframe. I don't think that is the situation. The President is going through the process of the U.N. He is trying to build international support. We are reaching out. We have reached out——

Mr. SCOTT. Secretary Kerry, respectfully, I am down to about 45 seconds. But I would like to know the principles——

Secretary KERRY. Well, I would be happy—you know what I would do, is I will submit to you within 24 hours in writing so you have a chance to weigh that properly. Because I don't want to do it in 30 seconds.

[The information referred to was not available at the time of printing.]

Mr. SCOTT. That would be perfect. I would just appreciate the principles under which the President uses with the decision to go or not to go to war.

And with that, Mr. Speaker, I will yield the remainder of my time.

Gentlemen, thanks for being here.

Secretary KERRY. Thank you, sir.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much.

Mr. Courtney.

Mr. COURTNEY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Secretary Hagel, just quickly for the record, the budget that was submitted back in February by the White House for fiscal year 2014 incorporated a turn-off of sequester. Isn't that correct? I mean it proposed again turning off sequester for 2014 by finding other ways to reduce the deficit.

Secretary HAGEL. It was the President's budget for 2014——

Mr. COURTNEY. Correct.

Secretary HAGEL [continuing]. That is right, that did not include sequester. That is right.

Mr. COURTNEY. Sequester. Thank you. I just wanted to at least get that out clearly in the record.

Secretary HAGEL. Yes. Thank you.

Mr. COURTNEY. Thank you.

Chairman McKeon has over the last year and a half had a number of hearings on Syria. General Dempsey, you have attended a number of those, as well as some of your colleagues from Central Command. And in every instance you have been very, I think, candid about the downside risk of almost every option that was posited in terms of a military response to Syria. And when Secretary Kerry was sort of laying out his concerns about whether or not a U.N. mechanism to take control of the chemical weapons was really, you know, it has got a lot of practical issues, I mean, frankly, you have been also very clear about the practical concerns about military force in terms of control of the chemical stockpiles. I mean, you wrote a letter on July 19th, just a couple months ago, to us and Senator Levin, where again you laid out the different options for military force in Syria. And in terms of control of chemical weapons, and even in the context of a limited strike, and I am just quoting from your letter here on the efficacy of a limited strike, "Over time the impact would be the significant degradation of regime capabilities and an increase in regime desertions."

You know, again, a lot of us read this stuff, you know, and I am sure in the public sometimes there is skepticism, but your warnings I think for a lot of us have been taken to heart. And what I think a lot of us struggle with is how can a policy rely on the Assad military to secure chemical stockpiles at the same time we are bombing that army? And again, you addressed this in the past, and a lot of us are trying to figure out what has changed here to give us that confidence level that we can count on the Assad regime to continue to control these stockpiles.

General DEMPSEY. Well, without getting into the targeting, as I tried to articulate earlier, we would, in our targeting, related to chemical weapons, we would make sure of two things: One, that we didn't create a chemical hazard ourselves; and, secondly, that we

wouldn't degrade the ability of the regime to secure it. Rather, we would seek to degrade the regime's ability to use it.

As far as the removal of chemical weapons, you know, our assumption would be, in this new proposal, it would be a permissive environment in the sense that the regime would be willing to do that. So we wouldn't have to fundamentally fight our way in to seize control of chemical weapons.

Mr. COURTNEY. So which is, in my opinion, a much more practical guarantee than, again, in the context of military force being applied. Again looking at your letter in July regarding the option of controlling chemical weapons, you know, you stated, "Our inability to fully control Syria's storage and delivery systems could allow extremists to gain better access." Again, these are spread out over different sites, dozens, from what we have been able to sort of hear in an unclassified setting.

How do we have any confidence level about desertions or that the Nusra Front or others are going to overwhelm some installation with a lieutenant or a captain. I mean, again, that is where, I think, in my district—which, by the way, has the largest military installation in New England, as Senator Kerry knows, in southeastern Connecticut—the wall of skepticism is really focused on these very practical issues about the downside risk of trying to control these stockpiles in a kinetic military environment. Again, I think a U.N.-sponsored mechanism is something that is going to raise people's comfort level infinitely compared to use of military force.

General DEMPSEY. Just in response, the mission I have been given, the targets I have been asked to prepare, and the scope of the operation would not tip the balance in favor of the opposition and therefore create some of the uncertainty you are describing. It would be much more limited than that. Which, by the way, some have criticized. But the mission I have been given is limited, focused, and significant, not symbolic, but wouldn't be intended to tip the balance here, and therefore the risk of loss of control of the stockpile is low.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Mr. Bishop.

Mr. BISHOP. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you, gentlemen, for being here. I appreciate this very much.

And I realize that, constitutionally, we have, as Congress, the power to declare war, but not to make war. There is a specific difference in the use of those two infinitives and why they happen to be there. So let me ask you a question which I think may have been asked earlier but when I was not here to hear the answer, and if you can redo that in, like, 30 seconds, I would be very appreciative of you redoing that particular answer if it was not fully vetted.

We have talked about the norm of chemical weapons since the treaty in the 1920s, but the norm is that has been repeatedly violated and chemical weapons have been used in conflicts of which the United States has not been involved repeatedly throughout history. I am an old history teacher. I would just like you to simply say in 30 seconds or less how this is different than any of the other

times in which chemical weapons have been used, involved, and the United States did not respond. Perhaps also saying, because you have said that chemical weapons have been used earlier in Syria, how this particular event is different from those other areas. Let me do that quickly, and if you can do it in 30 seconds, somebody, I would be appreciative of that.

Secretary KERRY. I think it is different because of the strategic interests of the United States in the region, because of our allies in the region, because of the threat to Israel, because of the threat to Jordan, the instability of Jordan, the stability of the region to our national security interests, and I think it is different because of the fact that warnings have been given repeatedly and have not been heeded. And I think that changes the equation.

Mr. BISHOP. Okay. I will accept, I don't know if I buy that, but I will accept that as a decent answer to the question. Let me try the other one then. This country bombed Libya without congressional approval. Now we are wanting congressional approval before we bomb Syria. Can you just tell me, not as far as our allies are concerned, but, domestically, what is the difference for us domestically for doing it then and not doing it now?

Secretary KERRY. There is a very big difference. In that situation, the Gulf States had made statements, the Arab League had made statements, NATO had made statements, and there was an urgency, an absolute urgency to moving because of the threat of Qadhafi that he would butcher like dogs the people of Benghazi. And there was a sense of urgency as a result on a humanitarian basis to try to save those lives.

In this situation there is, as I said, a pattern of repeated warnings, of escalating use, and of a clarity of the fact that we have strategic interests. You know, it is not insignificant——

Mr. BISHOP. All right. Let me—I don't want to be rude, but I want other people to ask questions. So what you are telling me is domestically there may not be a difference, but it is on the external circumstances for which each situation required that there was a difference between all of those.

Secretary KERRY. And the national security stakes for the United States and our allies.

Mr. BISHOP. Okay. One of the things for which I have a reason concern, I was not here when the last resolution of force was voted, and some of you were, I was not here. But I was amazed at what I think is the abuse of that system in providing political cover, one for another. You could get some political cover if Congress were to support this, but Congress could also get political cover by simply saying, go ahead, use your military, and then I will reserve till later when I appreciate or approve of how you use that.

One of the things that a resolution of force does not do is allow Congress to actually commit itself to a fully supportive nature of any kind of resolution, of any kind of use of force that may come on later on, which is another reason why I think there is a difference between to make war and to declare war. And it is a key and significant difference.

I also would like, one last thing in the last minute that I have here, using the military is great. Paying for it would actually be even better. I would hope the administration would put pressure on

the Senate, because the House has already passed an appropriation bill for our military. You use the same kind of vigor in getting the Senate to actually pass an appropriation bill for our military as you are asking us for a resolution of force to use our military.

With that, Mr. Chairman, I will yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Mr. Loebsack.

Mr. LOEBSACK. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thanks to the three of you for being here today. In particular, Secretary Kerry, since I think this is the first time you have been before this committee, so I appreciate your being here.

I guess at the outset, I think we can all agree that this incident occurred, I think we are all clear as to who is responsible for the chemical attack. I don't think there is any doubt about that. I think the American people accept that as well. But I have a series of questions related to why he did it, sort of what his motives are. And it doesn't matter to me which one of you answers these questions. But, first of all, why did Assad do this in the first place on August 21?

General DEMPSEY. Let me. Militarily, I can't speak to his internal domestic calculation, but militarily his force has been at war now for 2 years. It is tired. They were having an extraordinary difficult time clearing neighborhoods because of apartment complexes and so forth. It consumes a military force to clear an urban setting. And so he took the decision to clear it using chemicals.

Mr. LOEBSACK. In essence, to use chemical weapons on a tactical basis? Okay.

General DEMPSEY. Exactly.

Mr. LOEBSACK. Do you folks consider him to be a rational actor in the classical international relations sense of that word? Do you consider the President of Syria to be a rational actor?

Secretary KERRY. I mean, we get mixed info. To some degree he is isolated; to some degree he is operating under very difficult circumstances where people apparently tell him things he wants to hear, I don't think he gets a lot of bad news delivered to him, and so forth. But he certainly has a survival instinct and a rational sense of what he would like to do.

I think part of the—if I can just add to what the general said—part of his calculation for using them is that he has been able to use them in small amounts without anybody stopping that. We did ratchet up, President Obama, when he had conclusive evidence that the line that he had drawn had been crossed, he decided that was sufficient then to send a message, and he dictated that we would assist the opposition. Now he is taking it to the next level.

Mr. LOEBSACK. If I could continue on. Thank you for the answer. Did he use these weapons then to simply maintain his power from a rational actor standpoint? Is that fair to say?

Secretary KERRY. Use them to do what?

Mr. LOEBSACK. Maintain his power, to remain President of Syria.

Secretary KERRY. Yes. And to beat the opposition, sure.

Mr. LOEBSACK. What we are saying here, too, is that this limited strike, however limited it is, is not designed to remove him from power. Is that correct?

Secretary KERRY. That is correct.

Mr. LOEBSACK. Although it was stated, the President some years ago stated that he would like to see Assad go. Is that correct?

Secretary KERRY. That is correct.

Mr. LOEBSACK. And it has been stated today that perhaps further down the road there will be one of the—maybe one of the effects of this will be to get him to the bargaining table with the expectation, I assume, on the part of our government, many of us here, that he won't be President of Syria any longer. Is that correct?

Secretary KERRY. That is the fundamental strategy. But the connection is not quite accurate. This strike is calculated to tell him don't use those weapons and to reduce his capacity to do so sufficiently that he will know that if he were to do it again that worse could happen to him. That is predicated on his rational connection, if I do this, X will happen.

Mr. LOEBSACK. And it is important, I think, if we are going to have a successful strategy, it is important for us to think about this from his perspective. We don't like him, we don't empathize with him, we don't think he is a good guy. He is a bad guy. But at the same time if you were in his shoes and the greatest power on Earth attacked him in however limited a way, and if his goal is to stay in power, and if he is a rational actor, why would he not simply conclude that the strike was—even though we don't want it to be the case, you may not want it to be the case—why wouldn't he conclude that the strike is intended to get rid of him as President of Syria? Why would he not conclude that?

Secretary KERRY. Because a number of things. Messaging, the targeting and the nature of the strike, which he full well knows is—he listens to this debate. He knows Congress isn't deciding to get rid of him. The message is going to be pretty clear. So the bottom line is that it will be targeted to do what it can, which is to achieve a restraint on his ability to use his chemical——

Mr. LOEBSACK. And I understand what the goal is. I understand the rationale. My concern is——

Secretary KERRY. But, but——

Mr. LOEBSACK. Let me just finish, because I just have 4 seconds. My concern, and I think it is an important one, is that if he doesn't do what is intended——

The CHAIRMAN. Gentleman's time has expired. Gentleman's time has expired.

Mr. LOEBSACK [continuing]. What will be the consequence, what will be his response?

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Mr. Hunter.

Mr. HUNTER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Gentlemen, thank you for being here. First question is this: If Assad stops using his chemical weapons and gives them up tomorrow but continues to kill 50,000 Syrian civilians next year, do we take the military option off the table?

Secretary KERRY. I don't believe that the American people or the President want to get involved in that way directly in the war. But we have made the choice of supporting the opposition. That support for the opposition is growing, and it is very significant from a number of allies in the region. I can't go into all the details in this com-

mittee of some things that are happening, but it is clear that—I mean, there is a distinction between the chemical weapons, weapons of mass destruction, the prohibition on their use and this action versus the other efforts that are geared to try to bring him to the table——

Mr. HUNTER. If Assad kills 1,000 people a year using chemical weapons or 100,000 people a year using conventional weapons but not chemical, you are saying that it is the 1,000 that die using chemical that warrant an attack and the 100,000 that would die from conventional——

Secretary KERRY. No, it is the not the measurement of the numbers of people, it is the——

Mr. HUNTER. The way in which they were killed.

Secretary KERRY. It is the use. Correct.

Mr. HUNTER. Okay. So let's talk about the opposition. Let's say for argument's sake you can find 30,000 to 40,000 good, reasonable, moderate, more secular Syrians to fight on our side. Why is that proposal long term not before Congress? Why is the train and assist using Title 10, why is that not in the proposal so that there is some long-term strategy that we can look at to where it seems like we are not just lobbing a few missiles, we do a long-term train-and-assist goal?

Secretary KERRY. Well, up until now, to be honest with you, Congressman, there has been a fair amount of resistance to that, as you know. I mean, Senator McCain, Senator Graham, others have called for more significant efforts, but there has been a resistance in Congress, which is not——

Mr. HUNTER. If I could interrupt. There has been a resistance from everybody, including the American people, because it hasn't been articulated to them by the President or by the administration on what the different options are, I think, long term.

Secretary KERRY. Well, I think we have articulated. I certainly have had several hearings in which I have articulated the need to do this, and I came up the Hill and talked during the course of the time to some of the committees when we were looking for some reprogramming. But I think it is fair to say there hasn't been a major debate over Title 10, and there are people who believe that that might be a more effective way to go at it.

What I do know is the President is committed to continue to help the opposition. He would like to see us do more for the opposition. And I think that part of the follow-on to this will be a more focused effort with respect to the capacity of the opposition.

Mr. HUNTER. I would suggest that the Congress would be probably more open to that than we are to a strike. And even if you don't get the outcome you desire, if we are to bring this to a vote, I suggest that we bring that up and work on that as a next step.

Secretary KERRY. Look forward to working with you on that, Congressman.

Mr. HUNTER. Thank you.

General Dempsey, you are familiar with the Powell doctrine. There might be a Dempsey doctrine that I don't know about.

General DEMPSEY. Well, I read your editorial today, so I am refreshed on the issue of the Powell doctrine.

Mr. HUNTER. Okay. The problems with doctrines is you have got to stick to them sometimes, no matter the case. There are kind of objective wicket points that you can hit and go down.

If you were to look at Iran and Syria and go through the Powell doctrine, which would you say is the biggest threat to America's national security interest, Iran and their centrifuges, trying to get weaponized uranium, or Syria gassing their own people?

General DEMPSEY. I might suggest that is a false dichotomy. They are both threats to our national security. The longer term threat is clearly Iran.

Mr. HUNTER. So my question is this: If we are willing do this over chemical weapons, what stops us from trying to get a resolution of force to bomb the hell out of Iran, who is the real actor here, the real threat behind everything that we face in the Middle East? Yet we are focused on this sideshow. Where is the focus on Iran? And should the focus be on Iran and not necessarily Syria?

Secretary KERRY. Well, let me make it clear, we have an enormous focus on Iran. There is a new President, a new group of officials who have taken over responsibilities, new negotiators for the P5-plus-1. And there is a lot of discussion taking place within the administration about how those negotiations ought to proceed and what hopes there may be.

Mr. HUNTER. Mr. Secretary, I am almost out of time.

Secretary KERRY. Okay. I apologize for that.

Mr. HUNTER. It is not your fault.

If we are willing to do this, you say there is a lot of negotiations and talking about Iran, but you are coming to ask Congress for a resolution of force to commit to an act of war against the Assad regime and Syria, but you are not doing that for Iran, who I think we would all agree is the real existential threat to us and to our allies, to Israel, to Jordan——

Secretary KERRY. Congressman, Congressman, the President's first preference with respect to Syria is diplomacy. His first preference with respect to Iran is diplomacy. And it should be everybody's first hope.

The CHAIRMAN. Gentleman's time has expired.

Secretary KERRY. And we have exhausted that possibility with respect to Iran, but we have found that we have been blocked with respect to Syria. So there is a distinction.

The CHAIRMAN. Secretary Kerry will have to leave at 12:35. Secretary Hagel and General Dempsey will remain with us.

Ms. Tsongas.

Ms. TSONGAS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And thank you all for being here. And thank you, Secretary Kerry. We miss your representing us in the United States Senate, but appreciate so much your shouldering these new responsibilities.

And I thank you all for being here as we engage in this very important debate. I know it has been an issue as to whether or not it was a way forward. But, nevertheless, I think, as you have seen the tremendous interest that we all bring to this, and appropriately so. We have fast-moving events. I appreciate, Secretary, the sort of back-channel efforts to find a different way. And I appreciate very much also our President's openness to pursuing that different way.

But in the meantime we are really here to discuss the merits of a military option. And as I have heard you all say in many other briefings, the goal is to deter President Assad's future use of chemical weapons and degrade his capacity to use them. You are explaining an effort that will be limited in duration, limited in scope, and not open-ended. But that is not the concern so many of us have, that there is an inevitability to this that will take us much further down the road than any of us want.

So the question I have is that, given the many sites that are scattered across the country of Syria, the many chemical weapon sites, and the fact that many of the sites are located in population centers, it is clear that chemical weapons will remain in Syria despite whatever we may do militarily. And also, given our limited objectives, we do not seek regime change, President Assad will remain in power. So he will still have chemical weapons, and he has demonstrated a willingness to use them, whether it is as a tactical weapon, one of the many tools in the toolbox that he has when he is cornered and he sees no other way out. That is what led us to the August 21st event.

So let's just assume, not in the immediate aftermath, but 3 months down the road, 6 months down the road, President Assad chooses to use chemical warfare, whether in a small event or a large event. But as a result of military action and the red line that our President has drawn, we have said we will respond to that and we will respond to it militarily.

What will we do in the event President Assad uses chemical weapons, still in power for whatever reason, either as a tool in the toolbox or to show he is still in charge, that he doesn't take the international community or our efforts seriously, what will we do? I think I would start with you, General Dempsey.

General DEMPSEY. Well, I can't speak for our elected officials on what their guidance to me would be. But I can tell you that we have prepared subsequent target packets for exactly that contingency. So we will be prepared, if necessary, to act again.

Ms. TSONGAS. Would that necessitate your coming back to us? Let's say the authorization for use of military force is——

General DEMPSEY. It depends on the resolution, depends on how the resolution——

Ms. TSONGAS. So if there is a time limit and this is outside that time limit, would you come back to us?

Secretary KERRY. We would have to come back to you, but it would depend on whether or not you put a trigger in a resolution that covered that contingency.

Ms. TSONGAS. But do you think it would be appropriate to take military action should he use them again, given the red line we have drawn?

Secretary KERRY. This is intended not to destroy his entire capacity or the country or to engage in the regime change. It is intended to send the message to him that more can happen to him. If he makes the ill-advised decision to do it in the future, we would indeed believe that we would need to make it clear to him that you need to do more. That is evident. And the targeting is such that that would need to happen.

Now, I don't believe, personally, I don't believe that will happen. I think the message will be clear. I think it will send him a chilling message, notwithstanding that it is targeted and limited. And that is why I think that he and the Russians are responding the way that they are.

But I disagree with you about this inevitability, the sort of fear of inevitability it is going to drag us into something down the road. I worry much more that not doing something now creates an inevitability that is going to drag you into something more complicated and more urgent and more dangerous. And I think that is what people are——

Ms. TSONGAS. Mr. Secretary, could I give Secretary Hagel a chance to comment what your thoughts might be?

Secretary HAGEL. Well, I would agree with what Secretary Kerry said and General Dempsey. The President would always have the option and has been very clear on what he said about, as you note, violating a norm, our policy on this issue, starting with the fact the President has come to the Congress for this resolution on this authorization. And he has the option to do more, and he should.

Mr. THORNBERRY [presiding]. Gentlelady's time has expired. Thank you, Mr. Secretary.

Mr. Lamborn.

Mr. LAMBORN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Gentlemen, thank you all for your service, appreciate your being here. And I respect the decisions that you have to make, I respect our Commander in Chief, President Barack Obama, and the difficult decisions that he has to make. Agonizing decisions, in many cases.

You may remember I asked a question last night in the classified briefing that was given to the House about possible retaliation. And I asked this of Director James Clapper, if he knew of threats against our homeland or against our assets, against our interests. And I am confident that everything that can be done to protect us will be done of threats that we know of. But given the serious nature of what we are looking at, and almost the certainty that should a military strike be done by the U.S. on Syria there will be some attempts at retaliation, there will be serious consequences, given all that, I just have to express some doubts I have. And I am happy to hear your response to this.

But when I look at the pattern of leadership over the last few years, I just have some doubts. For instance, leading from behind in Libya. To me, that is not a good pattern. The unresolved murders in Benghazi. You know, I am very disturbed about that. I hear about that from my constituents to this day, almost on a constant basis. The massive defense budget cuts that we have had over the last 4½ or so years. That causes me concern. Pressuring Israel to make concessions that could harm Israel's security. I have doubts about that.

So when I put all those doubts together, and I know that we are going to have serious consequences, I am very reluctant to vote yes on this upcoming resolution. And I have many constituents, a great majority, who feel the same way. And they have articulated this very same concern. Is there anything that you can say that would relieve my doubts or concerns that I have just expressed to you?

Secretary HAGEL. Congressman, I will respond initially, and I suspect my colleagues would want to say something. You have covered a number of dimensions of your concern, legitimate. And obviously that is why we are having these hearings.

Let me start with Benghazi. This administration continues to follow through on the commitment the President of the United States made to find those responsible for what happened a year ago, and that is happening. DOD [Department of Defense] is working with FBI [Federal Bureau of Investigation], CIA [Central Intelligence Agency], other agencies in this. General Dempsey and I talk with Admiral McRaven. So we are closely aligned in continuing to do that. So that has not escaped the priority list of the President, nor this administration.

On some of the other issues you mentioned, Israel, we are working very closely with Israel on this, talking with Israel all the time, as Secretary Kerry noted his conversation with the Prime Minister, as we are with our allies in Turkey, in Iraq, in Jordan, in Lebanon. International community effort. This is an important piece of what the President wanted to accomplish. You heard what Secretary Kerry said in the progress that we have made and the numbers of countries that have come forward so far. There are more, there will be more understanding this.

One last point on this. I said in my opening remarks, and I have noted it here a couple times this morning, there is risk in inaction, too, which everyone on this committee knows. We could walk away. We understand the American public concern. I am concerned. We are all concerned. But let's look at the other alternative here, is that we just let it go. Conversations about Iran here a few minutes ago. These other countries, Iran, North Korea, Syria, Hezbollah, terrorist groups, are watching. They are observing. If there is no international response to this, if this allows to continue to play out with no response, do we think really that that makes things safer for our interests, our national security interests? Do we think this makes a more stable, secure world when we don't respond? Maybe so. I don't think so.

The CHAIRMAN [presiding]. Thank you. Gentlemen's time expired.

Mr. Johnson.

Mr. JOHNSON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I want to address you, Secretary Kerry, because after graduating from college and enlisting in the United States Navy, you served your country in Vietnam, where you were awarded a Silver Star, a Bronze Star, and three Purple Hearts. When you returned home, you went to law school, became an attorney, became a district attorney, prosecutor. Later, you offered yourself for political office in the United States Senate. You were elected, you served for 28 years, much of which, if not all of which, was on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, and at one time chairing that committee. And then you were appointed by President Obama to serve in this high office, Secretary of State. You were confirmed by your colleagues in the Senate 97 or 93 to 1, I believe it was. And you are a man who has always meant what he said and said what he meant. Isn't that a fact?

Secretary KERRY. I have tried, certainly, Congressman, I have tried.

Mr. JOHNSON. Well, I mean, so for anyone to think that you would say something off the cuff without meaning it is probably mistaken. Would you agree?

Secretary KERRY. Well, I am not speaking off the cuff, and when I do I get in trouble.

Mr. JOHNSON. I know you do not speak off the cuff. And so the other day, Monday, yesterday, when you mentioned about a way forward for Syria to be able to avoid a United States military response to the use of chemical weapons, you did not misspeak, did you?

Secretary KERRY. No, I didn't misspeak.

Mr. JOHNSON. And you meant to say what you said at that time. Isn't that correct?

Secretary KERRY. I did.

Mr. JOHNSON. And now, over the last week, both you and President Obama were at the G20 conference, or during that week at various times you were there. You——

Secretary KERRY. Actually, didn't. I was at the European conference in Vilnius; I did not go St. Petersburg.

Mr. JOHNSON. Okay. All right. So the President was able to speak with——

Secretary KERRY. President Putin.

Mr. JOHNSON [continuing]. President Putin while at the G20 conference in St. Petersburg, and they discussed this way forward for Syria to be able to avoid a military response.

Secretary KERRY. Correct.

Mr. JOHNSON. And isn't it a fact that this proposal that some say was made by President Putin is something that both President Obama and President Putin are responsible for.

Secretary KERRY. Well, it has been discussed, yes, and I think that is fair. But I think that most.

Mr. JOHNSON. And——

Secretary KERRY. Sorry. Go ahead, Congressman.

Mr. JOHNSON. And you actually discussed it yourself with the Foreign Minister of Russia, Mr. Lavrov, correct?

Secretary KERRY. Yes, I did.

Mr. JOHNSON. That was done this past weekend.

Secretary KERRY. Yes.

Mr. JOHNSON. And so it was no mistake that on Monday you were ready to come forward with this proposal.

Secretary KERRY. Well, I was asked about it.

Mr. JOHNSON. You were asked about it, and you responded because you are a man——

Secretary KERRY. I responded because I was asked.

Mr. JOHNSON [continuing]. Who means what you say and say what you mean, you responded appropriately to the question, and thus it became a public issue.

Now, my purpose for going through this is to first congratulate the Obama administration for the way which it has handled this dicey, delicate issue. And I myself am hopeful that going down the two tracks that the administration has laid forth, one military, the other diplomacy, that we will be able to accomplish the objective of this entire matter without having to use military force.

I want to thank you. And I wish I had time for you to respond.

The CHAIRMAN. Gentleman's time expired.

Secretary KERRY. Thank you, Congressman. I appreciate it very, very much.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Palazzo.

Mr. PALAZZO. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I want to thank the gentlemen for being here today. I know you all have a hard job and you have a very tough sell. I know you are up against the clock, Secretary Kerry, so I will keep my comments short.

I have no questions. I think everything for the most part has been asked and it has been answered, has been out in the public. And I have seen things behind closed doors. But I know one thing that is crystal clear and that there seems to be and appears to be, because there is no national will to engage the United States into Syria at this time. Why? I don't have all the reasons why. But what I hear the most is that there is no direct threat. There is no upside, there is no win, there is no strategy, there is no vision, there is no trust. And the list goes on and on.

I have done my job. I have reviewed the evidence. I have heard from the administration. And I have weighed the risk. I have looked at the pros and cons. But more importantly, I have listened to my Mississippians, my constituents, from Mississippi's Fourth Congressional District, and 98 percent of them say no. And I agree, I am a no as well. And, gentlemen, I wish you the best of luck. You do have a tough job. But America's just not buying what you are selling at this time.

I yield back.

Secretary KERRY. Could I just say, since there is a little time, Mr. Chairman, and I have to leave right now, I want to make sure everybody understands that President Obama and all of us would hope for a peaceful, diplomatic way to try to resolve this. I can't tell you how much I would hope that you could get these chemical weapons contained and destroyed. It is a tough lift. And I don't want people to think it is easy, which is why we haven't ballyhooed it in a bigger way. But if it could be achieved, it is obviously, you know, a terrific, you know, way to proceed forward.

But no one should underestimate. You know, having been elected for 28—for the terms I was, six terms, I guess it was—I feel I understand this sense in the country. But I keep hearing people saying they don't want to go into Syria. I even heard the Marine in the very early comments that were made earlier, that this Marine down in Quantico said, you know, don't take us into Syria, or we shouldn't go into Syria. We are not going into Syria.

This is a tough sell. You just said it. I get it. But we are not going into Syria. We are not asking to go into Syria. I don't see any route by which we slide into going into Syria. I don't see the slippery slope. People say you are going to get dragged in. I do not see that. We have a very clear distinction here.

There are people who want to fight this war in Syria. Not us. We are helping them. They want to go. They are in. They are there, all in. And there are plenty of people with deep pockets who want to support them. The Saudis, the Emiratis, the Qataris, the Turks, and so forth. We are not called on to do that. So I really have a

confidence after all these years here that we are not going to get dragged into something.

And sometimes around here I think Congressmen and Senators, and I did this myself, I voted on some things when it was 80 percent against me, or 85, but I thought it was the right thing to do for the country. And I think sometimes people have to think about that here, measure the facts and measure the consequences of not acting.

That would be my final comment, Mr. Chairman. You have been very, very generous, and I really appreciate all the members of the committee. I apologize for leaving now, but, as I said, I have to go have the conversation to try to help and see if there is any reality to this process. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Mr. Secretary. And I think you said it well. I think all of the Members of Congress, both sides of the aisle and both sides of the Capitol, want to do what is right. Finding how you determine what is right is the hard thing. And people, I think, can be very honest, very sincere, very hard-working, and think they are doing what is right and be totally opposite. And this is why we are going through this process. We thank you for what you are doing and thank you for being here.

Secretary KERRY. Thanks so much.

The CHAIRMAN. And Ms. Hanabusa.

Ms. HANABUSA. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, will we be able to put some questions in writing to the Secretary of State, though he has left? Thank you very much.

Thank you, Secretary Hagel, good to see you again, of course General Dempsey.

My question is about really what all of this means. First of all, I don't think there is anyone here that in any way condones the heinous use of the chemical weapons. I think that is a given. However, what we are here for is about the resolution and how we proceed from here.

One of the things in reading both yours and Secretary Kerry's statements, and I don't know if you can answer Secretary Kerry's statement, but he says that of course they are waiting for the proposal—this is the one that we have been discussing all morning—but we are not waiting long. Is there a time limit that the administration is willing to wait for that proposal? Is there anything, like a week, 2 weeks?

Secretary HAGEL. I don't know of a specific amount of hours or days, Congresswoman. I think the President mentioned this specifically last night in the six interviews he did, Secretary Kerry did. But I think it is pretty clear that that proposal has to come rapidly. I haven't seen the developments here in the last few hours other than what Secretary Kerry announced here on the agreement with some of the countries that he noted to go before the U.N. So I would assume this is on a very fast track, and I think the President has made that clear. Thank you.

Ms. HANABUSA. Secretary Hagel, we know that the issues of deter and degrade, that is our objective, and the deter and degrade seem to reference, or I thought it referenced basically the chemical weapons or the stockpiles of the chemical weapons. And what we are here is to hear how—of course General Dempsey says that it

is going to be a very limited, directed, tailored, and I think precision has always also been the adjectives used limiting the possibility of any kind of injury to the civilian population. But notwithstanding we could anticipate some kind of collateral damage.

And I thought that was also in line with the ultimate goal, which is that we all know that everyone is saying that whatever military action is taken will not—will not—resolve the issues regarding the chemical weapons, it would just deter at best or degrade at best, but that what would be required would be a diplomatic resolution. That is why your statement in your testimony that says, "A political solution created by the Syrian people is the only way to ultimately end the violence in Syria, and Secretary Kerry is helping lead international efforts to help the parties in Syria to help move towards a negotiated transition," the word "negotiated transition" is what caught my eye, because we have said continually that we are not engaged in any kind of a, quote/unquote, "regime change." Yet a negotiated transition seems to imply a regime change. And the reference to the Geneva II status in Secretary Kerry's statement, it is my understanding also references to a potential regime change.

So are we looking to, when we talk about a diplomatic resolution on this limited resolution, are we looking to a diplomatic resolution on the use of chemical weapons or are we looking to a diplomatic resolution towards a negotiated transition for the Syrian people, which seems to mean regime change?

Secretary HAGEL. Well, two specific issues. One, the resolution is defined clearly, narrowly, and the language speaks for itself. And I think we have, I hope, cleared most of it up. I don't know if you have seen the Senate Foreign Relations Committee resolution that they passed last week, but it defines it. It is very clear in scope, in length, in all that probably is necessary in an authority like this, at least in the eyes of the Senate committee. And the administration can work with that authorization.

The second part of your question, it is the policy of this administration that, as stated by President Obama, that President Assad has lost the credibility to govern his country. But this specific resolution that talks about this specific request is not about regime change, two separate issues.

Ms. HANABUSA. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Gentlelady's time expired.

Mr. Cook.

Mr. COOK. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I know it has been a long morning.

I want to talk about chemical warfare in general, and going back many, many years ago, the ones who probably had a signature attached to that, and that is the Russians, and who wrote the manuals, who dealt with Saddam Hussein. And I am just wondering if we are kind of forgetting that leverage point militarily in terms of who trained all these individuals. And if you could briefly address that.

And then my second condition is about MOPP 4 [Mission Oriented Protective Posture] conditions. Both gentlemen were in the military. And everybody has said that, well, you know, it is a limited attack, you are not sure what the response will be. But if

something happens, whether it is to those Patriot batteries that are within range and they have to go into MOPP 4, the fully buttoned-up conditions, which everybody knows that has been in the military, you are good for maybe, what, a half an hour before you pass out in the Middle East when it is 130 degrees.

So if you could just, since we are talking about chemical warfare, if the signature of the Russians and their historical ties in terms of leverage to Syria and those countries, that has been looked at. And, of course, secondly, if you could address the capability of the military in terms of up-to-date training in regards to MOPP 4 conditions.

General DEMPSEY. Yeah. We are well aware of the expertise that the Russians have in chemical weapons. And, in fact, I think it is what leads us to believe that this offer might have some credibility. In terms of Mission Oriented Protective Posture, MOPP, as you know, it is 0 through 4, it would be irresponsible for a commander to, just based on where we are today, to have people in MOPP 4, because you are right, you can't sustain operations. By the way, MOPP 4 is full gear, protective mask, gloves, and boots. So what commanders do is they ratchet it up and down based on, as you know, on the threat. And we are prepared to do that as the threat changes. And we also believe that we have got good enough radars there that we would also understand when the threat was highest.

Mr. COOK. Thank you, General.

And the other question I wanted to ask, because this was a previous question, and we were talking about utilities and camouflage and changing one part to the other. And I raised the question, well, when is the last time your chemical—and this was 3 or 4 months ago—when is your chemical protective equipment, has that been looked at for a change? I know we are changing the sleeve and it is expensive every time we do that. If we are talking about the chemical environment, I think we have got to look again at how we are going to outfit those individual soldiers, marines, anybody that goes there, because I get very excited about it. And Congressman Jones talked about 1st Battalion, 8th Marines, that was my old battalion. It was 2nd Marine Division. And it was a long time ago but, you know, you never forget those, particularly the troops that died. So if you could just address that very briefly.

General DEMPSEY. Thanks, Congressman. And, you know, you are exactly right, because we haven't dealt with this kind of threat in a while, your question is valid. I will assure you that we are constantly updating both our chemical equipment and our chemical doctrine and continue to train to that standard at places like the national training centers, Twentynine Palms, and so forth. But I will also tell you, as you know, chemical gear has a shelf life, and so it has to be replenished. And the new chemical suit is called the JLIST [Joint Lightweight Integrated Suit Technology] and it has a shelf life, and we monitor that closely.

Mr. COOK. Well, you know, I got the Twentynine Palms, and I got Fort Irwin, and I am always concerned about their readiness. They had to cancel three exercises out there because of money. And as you know, if you train to go to war and when we start doing that and then the balloon goes up, you never know what is going to happen when you are going to go. And, Mr. Secretary, we talked

about this in Afghanistan. I know you have been, both of you gentlemen, have been in combat. And this is very, very serious, and we have got to make sure that these troops got to be combat ready, and we can't be stupid about this.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Mr. Carson.

Mr. CARSON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

General Dempsey, I am interested in better understanding, sir, how a strike would be carried out with minimal risk to our service members. I am particularly concerned about anti-ships and anti-air risks. To the extent possible in an unclassified setting, could you tell us about the ability, sir, to conduct a strike with minimal risk of serious immediate retribution from the Assad forces?

General DEMPSEY. Risk to our force?

Mr. CARSON. Yes, sir.

General DEMPSEY. Yeah. The strikes as currently conceived would be standoff. I won't say more than that, but we would remain outside of the ability of the Syrian regime to threaten us.

Mr. CARSON. Yes, sir.

Secretary Hagel, can you tell us, sir, about what resources and capabilities, if any, the Arab League and other regional players could bring to an operation in Syria?

Secretary HAGEL. Well, Secretary Kerry noted some of the specific countries that we are talking to who are very supportive of our potential actions, would want to participate in some way. So those engagements and conversations are going on right now, as well as our military-to-military with some of those countries.

Mr. CARSON. Thank you, gentlemen.

Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Dr. Wenstrup.

Dr. WENSTRUP. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you, gentlemen, for being here today.

General Dempsey, just for a second I am going to refer to an article that was in Army magazine that has you quoted within it. And you talked about civilian leaders having to make these tough decisions. And you said, "Once we take action, we should prepare for what comes next. Deeper involvement is hard to avoid." You also referred to use of force is no less than an act of war, and we could inadvertently empower extremists or unleash the very chemical weapons we seek to control. A fuller quote in your letter to Senator Carl Levin, the chairman of Armed Services Committee in the Senate, said, "I know that the decision to use force is not one that any of us takes lightly. It is no less than an act of war." That is where those quotes came from. And, General, I tend to agree with you on those assessments.

And then Secretary Kerry, and I am sorry he had to leave, but I will address this to him, you know, he said, what we have to do is make clear to people we are not going to war, that we are not talking about war. That makes it very difficult for us to hear one comment that this is no less than an act of war and then the Secretary saying we are not going to war.

And military actions are always going to have a greater chance of success within this country if we have the backing of the Amer-

ican people, which is difficult right now. And it is difficult to make that case when you hear these two seemingly diametrically opposed opinions of what we are doing.

I am going to make this easy, this should be a yes or no answer for you, which after a long morning you might appreciate. But I pose this question, I will ask Secretary Kerry for the record.

[The information referred to was not available at the time of printing.]

Dr. WENSTRUP. If facilities in the United States were attacked by another nation in the same manner that is being proposed by the United States upon Syria, which you know what those proposals are, and it has been described as a severe consequence to the Assad regime, would you, if these were enacted on the United States, the same things we are proposing to do, would you consider that to be an act of war against the United States of America?

General DEMPSEY. I won't answer one question, but I will answer briefly. I have said in previous testimony that the strike would be an act of war. I think the distinction the Secretary is making is that the connotation of war, the kind of vision of war is protracted, long campaigns, and that that is not what we are envisioning.

Dr. WENSTRUP. Thank you. So then your answer would be yes, you would consider the same type of thing upon the United States as an act of war.

General DEMPSEY. Yes. For a soldier, when you put them in conflict, it tends to be a war.

Dr. WENSTRUP. Yes, sir.

Secretary Hagel.

Secretary HAGEL. No, I think that is right. This is an issue of I can understand the definitions of what is war. You know, we haven't declared war in this country for a long time, but we have been in some. And matter of fact, two of the three longest wars we have ever been in, I think we all agree are wars but we didn't declare them war. So, I mean, we can dance around the definitions. But my sense is any time you use military authority or power, that is some aspect of war.

Dr. WENSTRUP. Thank you, sir. And I yield back my time.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Ms. Shea-Porter.

Ms. SHEA-PORTER. Thank you.

Thank you very much for being here. And I know you have had a grueling week. I have attended several of your briefings. So we appreciate it very much.

I do believe the intelligence, but I also am concerned that we are going to swap chaos for chaos. Assad is murderous, he is evil, he is all those things that we have talked about. But, you know, the rebels have a problem also. They have got up to 25 percent Al Qaeda and other extremists, according to the Secretary of State. I am very concerned about that.

So we said we don't plan to topple Assad, we are just going to basically take out some capacity there and degrade and deter. But what if it does happen? We don't really know what will happen in that situation of chaos. You know, the best military plans sometimes do go astray. Then who is going to get control of these chemical weapons? What is the plan? You perhaps can't say it, but I just

need to be reassured that there is some plan there. Also I am concerned about the death of more innocent people and the United States will be blamed for that. We know that they will be posting, just as they have posted the other victims as well.

And finally, how does this air strike, if it occurs, play out in the region? We have got Sunni, we have got Shia, we have got Alawite, we have got Christian. We have such a hodgepodge of different religions and different causes and different attitudes. How would this play out in the region for us and also for them?

Secretary HAGEL. Well, thank you. And I recall your questions last night on this issue. So thank you, Congresswoman. I will give you my response, and General Dempsey may want to add something further.

First, we recognize, I think we have all said and everyone here understands, that there is always unpredictability any time when a military strike occurs or action is taken. We do everything we can, as we have been, to think through options, contingencies, possibilities. What are the options on retaliation? What would happen if the Assad regime goes down? Your note about the percentage. Generally speaking, it is imperfect, what our intelligence assessments are on the composition of terrorists or the bad groups in that 100,000, generally, group who represent the opposition. That is all reality. But there are also a significant percentage of pretty responsible individuals that make up the Syrian Military Council and other dimensions of the opposition. Now, this is no guarantee of any outcomes. So we think through these things. And we work with our partners, as I have noted, along that border. We are very closely connected with all those countries and their military and their leaders.

The strikes and the options that we have—possibilities of strikes—that we have given the President are all options that factor in what you are talking about. That is one of the reasons that is noted in the resolution in the President's request. The focus, the objective was not to topple Assad, specifically to deter through destruction of his capabilities a future use of chemical weapons. That also has a degrading effect on his military.

Ms. SHEA-PORTER. But the what if——

Secretary HAGEL. But it also has other dimensions to it.

Ms. SHEA-PORTER. Excuse me. The what if is still sitting out there. And I think that is what is frightening everybody.

Secretary HAGEL. Well, that is a what if. And I don't know of anybody who can give you 100 percent guarantee of anything. But I will also put the other side of this back on the table, which I have noted. What if we do nothing?

Ms. SHEA-PORTER. And, Secretary, I know——

Secretary HAGEL. We are pretty sure that he will continue not only to do what he is doing, but worse.

Ms. SHEA-PORTER. I don't mean to interrupt but I am down to 30 seconds. So I just wanted to say one last thing here. For the countries that are surrounding and saying that they support this, I would like to see them more visible. I would like them to say they plan to put their military there. I would like to see them say they will put their money there. I would like to see them step up the humanitarian aid. I have looked at the numbers; the United States

is once again leading way, and I am proud of that, for humanitarian aid.

But I think what we are also hearing from our constituents is, you know, somebody else needs to step up and provide more humanitarian aid and provide more whatever it is that they want in the region instead of saying always, well, you know, good for you, United States, but we won't say our name publicly.

So thank you very much. I yield back.

Mr. KLINE [presiding]. The gentlelady's time has expired.

Mrs. Walorski.

Mrs. WALORSKI. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Sirs, thank you again for being here. And I represent the Indiana Second District in northern Indiana, and we have heard, obviously, like everybody else has, the hesitancy and the absolute no in this mission. And I guess two questions I have that we receive a lot. One is the urgency of the hour. Why now? We have sat here, General Dempsey, and listened to you and other folks have come in to brief us on every single time there has been a chemical issue with Syria. So my one question is, why now? And if you could just briefly answer that, I have a second question.

Secretary HAGEL. Well, I will start real quick. My quick answer is the scope of this attack on the 21st of August, and I think there is very little question now as the evidence continues to roll in, independent evidence, that it was the Assad regime who perpetuated this attack against their own people, the scope of this, the intent of that scope has shifted significantly from the earlier chemical weapons attacks. This last one was to clear an entire area. He used that as a clear military tactic. He had not done that in past attacks. That is one of the parts of this.

And, General?

General DEMPSEY. I have nothing to add to that.

Mrs. WALORSKI. And my second question is, I mean, to me it was new information that we learned today that Secretary Kerry said that we are—we, the United States of America—supporting the opposition in Syria. And my question is, how were those opponents vetted? How do we know we can trust them? How do we know when there are so many factions there that we have all heard about, we have read it in the news, how many different factions are there, what criteria did we use to decide that we are going to trust the American foreign policy with folks that are considered rebels?

Secretary HAGEL. Well, I will begin, and then General Dempsey may want to come in with more specifics. But we have been vetting through the Syrian Military Council and our partners in that area for some time the opposition. That is not new. The President announced in June that he was going to step up his assistance to the opposition, specifically the Military Council. We know, everyone here knows, it has been already alluded to, that the humanitarian assistance that we have provided and the nonlethal assistance we have provided has been significant, in the hundreds of millions of dollars. But the President noted publicly in June that he would step that up to include military assistance.

General, you want to add anything?

General DEMPSEY. Regional partners, the part of the opposition that we have become familiar with, tribal leaders. But make no

mistake about it, we have done this now—I have done it personally in three different countries in the region, and it is challenging. But we have a methodology.

Mrs. WALORSKI. And how do we know, back to the chemical stockpiles, I asked this same question months ago, when we were sitting in a hearing and we talked about chemical stockpiles in Syria, and we had folks coming in from the intelligence agency. We had everybody in here talking about this issue. And I asked the question before, who monitors the stockpiles? How do we know today, now that we know we have had all these other attacks? And we had briefings in here and folks talking about the fact that we don't know where they are all at. How do we know today that Hezbollah and Hamas and Muslim Brotherhood and Al Qaeda haven't taken some of those stockpiled weapons and moved them elsewhere? How in the world? We can't track all of them.

General DEMPSEY. No. We have all testified to the difficulty of having perfect intelligence about the chemical weapons. And to the Congresswoman's point, the risk of having some of that capability migrate into the hands of extremists exists today, the risk does. But we have no indications today that any of the groups you mentioned have any access to those chemical weapons. The indications are today that it does remain under the firm control of the regime.

Mrs. WALORSKI. And that goes back into the months before when we had reports here——

General DEMPSEY. It does.

Mrs. WALORSKI [continuing]. That it was difficult tracking those chemical stockpiles?

General DEMPSEY. It does.

Mrs. WALORSKI. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you, gentlemen.

Mr. KLINE. Thank the gentlelady.

Mr. Kilmer.

Mr. KILMER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

You know, in the short time that I have been a Member of this Congress, this is clearly the most consequential issue that we have dealt with. I sent out an email to my constituents last week, and I have literally gotten thousands of responses back, including from veterans and from service members serving overseas. And all of them asked some very real questions about whether or not Congress should authorize the President to take military action in Syria. And I appreciate your willingness to be here to help answer some of those questions.

We have repeatedly discussed the need to show the integrity of our commitment with action, and that Iran and North Korea are watching. One of the most common questions or themes that I have been asked about is, what happens if we approve the use of military force and Assad crosses the line again? At that point, how do we keep this from escalating? And how do we limit further military actions that it is clear the United States people have a great deal of skepticism about?

Secretary HAGEL. Well, that question, Congressman, is one, as you know, that we have dealt with here this morning, as we have over the last 2 weeks.

We believe, based on our intelligence, based on our close coordination with our partners in the area, no, as General Dempsey said, no perfect answer to your question. And because of every contingency and option we have provided, that if we, in fact, carry forward with the options the President may use, this will specifically address the clearly defined objective of degrading and deterring his capability to further use chemical weapons.

Now, if he would choose, if that would occur, if he would choose to accelerate his efforts and use chemical weapons again, then, certainly, the President of the United States has every option, not just militarily, but other options available to him. I can't speak for the President, but my guess would be he would come back to the Congress and ask for further authorization. But the President always has that option to defend the interests of this country, and I believe he would.

You want to add anything, General?

General DEMPSEY. The only thing I would add, sir, is you asked what is it that causes us to believe we can manage the risk of escalation. I think it is a combination of the limited nature of the military operation as conceived. I think it is our ability to overmatch opponents in that part of the world. And it is our forward presence. And back to the budget issues we have been talking about, it is why forward presence is such an important part of our national security strategy.

Mr. KILMER. Thank you.

I don't know if this is best directed toward Secretary Kerry or if either of could you speak to this. The other probably main thing that I have heard from folks in my neck of the woods is they want to know that all other options have been exhausted prior to taking military action, particularly in light of the news that Russia is recommending disarmament of chemical weapons from Syria.

Do you believe that there are further opportunities to achieve a diplomatic resolution to this crisis? Are there other tools that we ought to be looking at? Are there any further sanctions that ought to be contemplated? What other tools should be contemplated, if any?

Secretary HAGEL. Congressman, thank you. I believe Secretary Kerry did address that here earlier this morning in reciting an inventory of different things that we have been doing in the way of diplomatic efforts, working with various institutions, organizations. He went through the United Nations. I think most every generally recognized global institution we have been working through. Sanctions with our European Union partners. We have exhausted almost every diplomatic option in this effort.

This is why I noted in my response or in my remarks earlier in response to some questions here earlier this morning that Secretary Kerry continues to lead this Geneva II process. Diplomatic resolution, political settlement. I think most of us believe—the President does, I do, I think most of our partners in the world—believes that is the only way that this is going to get settled, through some diplomatic, political resolution. We are continuing to play that card out and stay on that track. Evidence of the development of the last 48 hours, what Secretary Kerry noted a couple of hours ago. So we are pursuing that track as well.

Mr. KILMER. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I yield back.

Mr. KLINE. Gentleman yields back.

I am advised that by previous agreement we need to bring this hearing to a close. Before I drop the gavel, I am going to do two quick things. One is a clarifying question to General Dempsey.

As I understand it, General, your testimony has been repeatedly that you have been given the mission to develop military options to, quote, "deter and degrade." And by that in amplification means his chemical capability and so forth. You were not given a mission, as I understand it, to develop military options, to demonstrate serious consequences to the neighbors for crossing an American red line. Is that correct?

General DEMPSEY. I am not sure what you mean by neighbors.

Mr. KLINE. Anybody else in the world. But I am specifically talking about Iran, Korea, and others.

General DEMPSEY. No. The mission has never been conceived as aimed at deterring others, although clearly there is a relationship.

Mr. KLINE. Thank you. Okay. So I see a number of members have stayed here for several hours. I know they have questions. I understand that some of them will be submitting questions for the record. I would ask the witnesses to please respond promptly.

And with that I thank the witnesses and the members for being here. And we are adjourned.

If members will just hold on until the witnesses can leave.

Secretary HAGEL. Mr. Chairman, thank you. And members especially who stayed. If they get us their questions, we will respond briefly and immediately so that they will have response. Thank you.

[Whereupon, at 1:08 p.m., the committee was adjourned.]

A P P E N D I X

SEPTEMBER 10, 2013

PREPARED STATEMENTS SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

SEPTEMBER 10, 2013

Opening Statement of Chairman Howard P. "Buck" McKeon
"Proposed Authorization to Use Military Force in Syria"
September 10, 2013

Good morning ladies and gentlemen. The House Armed Services Committee meets to receive testimony on the President's proposed authorization to use of military force in Syria. Our witnesses include Secretary of State John Kerry, Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel, and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Martin Dempsey. Gentlemen, thank you for joining us today.

This committee has closely monitored the conflict in Syria. Throughout, this committee has focused on understanding the strategic context; the options; the risks of those options; as well as the costs of military action in Syria.

Today, I hope our witnesses will focus not only on the case for military action that has been made over the last two weeks, but also address the justifiable concerns that have been raised by Members on a bipartisan basis. This includes understanding more about likely second order affects, how a limited strike will achieve our policy goals, and the planning that has been done to respond should Assad miscalculate – in terms of both operational and financial planning. What options, short of additional military action, do we have to respond to escalation or retaliation? And Secretary Hagel, although you've estimated that this operation will cost tens of millions of dollars, in April of this year you testified: "…let's start with the question of how do you pay for [military action in Syria] if we do something…Yes, I think it is pretty clear that a supplemental would be required."

History tells us that there will likely be second or third order effects that demand further U.S. military action. Therefore, it gives me great pause that we have not addressed the devastating cuts to our military due to sequestration – even as we commit our military to another new mission. We have surged troops to Afghanistan – and cut the military's budget. We have flown missions over Libya – and cut the military's budget. We are pivoting to the Asia-Pacific – and cutting the military's budget. All told, these cuts total an astounding $1.2 trillion. And now

we are considering strikes on Syria – while the military's budget continues to be cut.

I share President Obama's concern about Assad's vicious use of chemical weapons on his people. I am also deeply concerned about the United States' standing in the region. When the President drew his redline, he put America's cards on the table. A leader either enforces his redlines – or becomes irrelevant.

However, I am equally concerned about the condition of a military that has been chewed up from budget cuts and years of fighting. We cannot keep asking the military to perform dangerous mission after mission with multiple rounds of defense cuts, including sequestration, hanging over their heads.

Through decisiveness, clarity of purpose, and leadership, the President has the power to allay many of these concerns.

I look forward to answers to these questions and to your testimony.

Statement of Hon. Adam Smith, Ranking Member,
Committee on Armed Services

Hearing on "Proposed Authorization to Use Military Force in Syria"

September 10, 2013

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank you for this hearing. I want to thank our witnesses, Secretary Kerry, Secretary Hagel, General Dempsey, for being here and for your outstanding leadership during this crisis and on many, many other difficult issues that we face as a country.

I think there is no question at this point that Assad used chemical weapons in Syria. The evidence, the intelligence case that has been made has been overwhelming in the hearings that I have been to. This, of course, is on the heels of a civil war in which Assad has killed somewhere in the neighborhood of 100,000 of his own civilians, which is a series of abhorrent acts in and of themselves.

The challenge for us in this panel, you know, and for the people who are testifying today is how best to respond to all of this, how best to hold President Assad accountable for all of this. There is no question, and I agree completely, that trying to control proliferation of chemical weapons is a goal that we must have as a Nation and must go forward. But can a one-time limited military strike accomplish that? And I think what our committee wants to hear today is how is that going to happen? How will this one-time strike be enough to hold Assad accountable, while not creating more chaos and running the risk that these very dangerous weapons would fall, frankly, into even more dangerous hands, given the presence of Al Qaeda and other groups in Syria that would not be friendly to us, and it would be very dangerous. How do you strike that balance between holding Assad accountable and not creating a worse situation? It is very, very difficult. We are going to have some serious questions today as the how that is accomplished, and we look forward to hearing answers from our witnesses to help us better understand this problem.

Also, we are very interested in how serious the Russian proposal is. If you think that is a worthy goal in terms of holding Assad accountable and eliminating

the chemical weapons, is that something that can happen? We definitely want to hear how you think that plays into our decisions going forward.

Lastly, I just want to agree with the chairman on sequestration. It is an enormous problem. Certainly it adds a layer of complication for every conflict that comes up, including the one in Syria. And personally I would end sequestration tomorrow. You know, we can talk about how to get the budget deficit under control long term, revenues and spending and all of that, but the one thing we know is that sequestration is really devastating our military, causing a number of problems in other portions of the budget. It was never meant to be implemented; it was meant to be a forcing mechanism, an intention that has clearly failed. I think we should just eliminate it, and then we can get back to a discussion of how to control the deficit without torturing the discretionary budget on a day-in-and-day-out basis. So if this Syrian crisis prompts a more serious discussion of that, that will be one tiny little positive in what is otherwise a very, very dangerous situation.

I look forward to the testimony and to the questions from our committee. And again, I thank this distinguished panel for being here today.

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Secretary of State John Kerry
Opening Statement on Syria to the House Armed Services Committee
Tuesday, September 10, 2013

Chairman McKeon, Ranking Member Smith, distinguished members of the Committee: Thank you very much for having us here today. As we convene for this briefing, it's not an exaggeration to say to all of you, my former colleagues, that the world is watching. It is watching to see how we make this decision and whether in a dangerous world, our government can speak with one voice and make a difference.

This is obviously one of the most important decisions any Member of Congress can make in the course of a career. So I want to make sure we're leaving plenty of time for discussion and a real back and forth. I'll open with just a few quick comments about the questions I'm hearing from many of your colleagues and what I'm hearing in the news.

First, people have asked me why we are choosing to have a debate on Syria when there is so much we need to be doing here at home. Let me assure you – the President didn't wake up one day and say, "Let's go take military action in Syria." He didn't choose this. We didn't choose this. We are here today because Bashar al-Assad and his military made a decision to use the world's most heinous weapons to murder more than 1,400 innocent people, including more than 400 children. They made a choice, and I believe we have no choice but to respond. To those who doubt whether Assad's action must have consequences, remember that our inaction is guaranteed to invite even worse consequences.

Which brings me to the second question I've heard lately: What really is at stake here? The answer is plain and simple: What Assad has done directly affects America's security. We have a huge national interest in containing all WMD. Allowing these weapons to be used with impunity would be an enormous chink in our armor against proliferation.

Think about it: Our own troops have not been subjected to a chemical weapons attack since World War I. There's a reason for that, and the reason is the international community's agreement that these weapons are inhumane. If we don't answer Assad today, we will irreparably damage a century-old standard that has protected American troops in war.

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The stability of the region is also in our direct security interest. Our allies and friends in Israel, Jordan, and Turkey are one stiff breeze away from being hurt or killed by an empowered Assad and his wanton use of chemical weapons. Failure to act now will make an already volatile neighborhood even more combustible. It will almost certainly pave the way for a more dangerous challenge in the future.

Third, not acting would corrode American leadership and influence in an already dangerous world, one where we remain the indispensable nation. Bad actors will mistake our reluctance to follow through for weakness.

For example, if we choose not to act, we will be electing to send Iran a message of American ambivalence and weakness. That will undoubtedly put Israel's security – and the region's – at risk. There is a reason Israel supports our taking this action.

Let me also remind you that Congress passed the Syria Accountability Act, which says clearly that, Syria's chemical weapons threaten the security of the Middle East – and it also recognizes that they threaten, and I quote, "the national security interests of the United States." With that Act, you have acknowledged the danger that chemical weapons pose to our friends and to our own interests.

The fourth question I've been asked many times is why diplomacy isn't changing this dynamic. Let me assure you: Diplomacy is our first resort. We have brought this issue to the UN Security Council on many occasions. We have sent direct messages to Syria, and had Syria's allies bring the regime direct messages about chemical weapons – all to no avail.

In the last three years, Russia and China have vetoed three Security Council resolutions condemning the Syrian regime for inciting violence, or resolutions that promote a political solution to the conflict. Russia has even blocked press releases that do nothing more than express humanitarian concern for what is happening in Syria, or merely condemning the generic use of chemical weapons.

We have brought these concerns to the UN, making the case to members of the Security Council that protecting civilians, prohibiting the use of chemical weapons use and promoting peace and security were in our shared interests.

That's why I have been working with the Russians and the region's players to get to a Geneva II peace negotiation. The end to the conflict in Syria requires a political solution. But make no mistake: it will never happen if Assad believes he can just gas his way out of his predicament.

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We are, without questions, building a coalition of support. Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, France, and many others are committed to doing this together. More than 20 nations have now signed on to the G12 statement in support for our action, partnerships that will also help us put a day-after strategy in place. But our diplomatic hand only becomes stronger if other countries know America is speaking with one voice. We are stronger when we are united.

And in order for us to speak with one voice, we need you, the Congress. We need to Congress to uphold the commitments you have made. Congress agreed to the Chemical Weapons Convention. And Congress, as I mentioned, wrote and passed the Syria Accountability Act.

Now, I want to be crystal clear about something. Some want to do more in Syria, some are leery about doing anything at all. But one goal we can all agree on is that chemical weapons cannot be under the control of a man so craven he has repeatedly used chemical weapons against his own fellow Syrians with horrific results, as all the world can see.

Yesterday, we challenged the regime to turn them over to the secure control of the international community so they could be destroyed. That, of course, would be the ultimate way to degrade and deter Assad's arsenal and the ideal way to take this weapon away from him.

Assad's chief benefactor, the Russians, responded by saying they would come up with a proposal to do exactly that if it would avert military action.

We're waiting for that proposal. But we're not waiting long.

President Obama will take a hard look at it – but it has to be swift, it has to be real, and it has to be verifiable. It can't be a delaying tactic, and if the UN Security Council seeks to be the vehicle to make it happen, well then it can't be a debating society.

Many countries – and many of you in Congress, from those who wanted military action to those skeptical of it – want to see if this idea could become reality.

But make no mistake about why this is now even on the table. They say nothing focuses the mind like the prospect of a hanging. It is the credible threat of force that has been on the table these last two weeks that has for the first time brought

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the regime to even acknowledge that they have a chemical weapons arsenal, and it's been our determination to hold Assad accountable that has motivated others to even talk about real and credible international action.

How do you maintain that pressure? We have to continue to show Syria, Russia and the world that we will not fall for stalling tactics. If the challenge we laid down is going to become a real proposal, it is only because of the threat of force we are discussing today – and that threat is more compelling if Congress stands with the Commander-in-Chief.

Finally, let me correct a common misconception. I keep hearing about America going to war. We're not going to war. President Obama is not asking for a declaration of war. There will be no American boots on the ground. Let me repeat: There will be no American boots on the ground. What we're talking about is a targeted, limited, but consequential action that will reinforce the prohibition against chemical weapons. We're talking about action that will degrade Assad's capacity to use these weapons and ensure they do not proliferate.

With this authorization, the President is asking for the power to make sure that the United States of America means what we say.

Mr. Chairman, Mr. Ranking Member, members of the Committee: The risk of not acting is far greater than the risk of acting. If we fail to act, Assad will believe he has a license to gas his own people again. That license would turn prohibited weapons into tactical weapons. It would take an exception and make it the rule. It would degrade America's security, undermine our standing and erode our strength in the world.

In a world of terrorists and extremists, we ignore these risks at our peril. We simply cannot afford to have chemical weapons become the IED or car bomb of tomorrow. Neither our country nor our conscience can bear the costs of inaction. Thank you.

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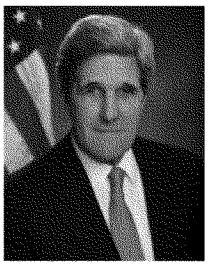
John Kerry



Secretary of State

Term of Appointment: 02/01/2013 to present

On February 1, 2013, John Forbes Kerry was sworn in as the 68th Secretary of State of the United States, becoming the first sitting Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chairman to become Secretary in over a century.

Secretary Kerry joined the State Department after 28 years in the United States Senate, the last four as Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

Secretary Kerry was born on December 11, 1943, at Fitzsimons Army Hospital in Aurora, Colorado, one of four children of the late Rosemary Forbes Kerry and Richard Kerry, a Foreign Service Officer.

Shortly before he graduated from Yale University, Secretary Kerry enlisted to serve in the United States Navy, and went on to serve two tours of duty. He served in combat as a Swift Boat skipper patrolling the rivers of the Mekong Delta, returning home from Vietnam with a Silver Star, a Bronze Star with Combat V, and three Purple Hearts.

Back in the United States, Secretary Kerry began to forcefully speak out against the Vietnam War. Testifying at the invitation of Chairman J. William Fulbright before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, he asked the poignant question, "How do you ask a man to be the last man to die for a mistake?" He also began a lifelong fight for his fellow veterans as a co-founder of the Vietnam Veterans of America, and later as a United States Senator who fought to secure veterans' benefits, extension of the G.I. Bill for Higher Education, and improved treatment for PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder).

In 1976, Secretary Kerry received his law degree from Boston College Law School and went to work as a top prosecutor in Middlesex County, Massachusetts, where he took on organized crime, fought for

victims' rights, and created programs for rape counseling. He was elected Lieutenant Governor of Massachusetts in 1982, and 2 years later, he was elected to the United States Senate where he served for 28 years.

In 2009, Secretary Kerry became Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, assuming a leadership role on key foreign policy and national security issues facing the United States, including Afghanistan and Pakistan, nuclear nonproliferation, and global climate change. His service as Chairman built on his previous Senate work that included helping to expose the Iran-Contra scandal and leadership on global AIDS.

As Chairman of the Senate Select Committee on POW/MIA Affairs, he worked to learn the truth about American soldiers missing in Vietnam and to normalize relations with that country.

In 2010, as Chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, Secretary Kerry was instrumental in the ratification of the New START (Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty) Treaty, a vital nuclear arms reduction agreement with Russia that helps steer both countries away from dangerous nuclear confrontations.

In his 28 years on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Secretary Kerry chaired the Asia and Middle East subcommittees where he authored and passed major legislation on international drug trafficking, international money laundering, humanitarian aid, and climate change, and he helped negotiate the UN's genocide tribunal to prosecute war crimes in Cambodia.

He also held senior positions on the Finance, Commerce, and Small Business committees, as well as served as a member of the bipartisan Joint Committee on Deficit Reduction, where he worked across party lines to try and reduce the country's debt and strengthen our economy. Prior to his departure from the Senate, Secretary Kerry was the seventh-most senior Senator.

Secretary Kerry was the Democratic Party's nominee for President of the United States in 2004.

Secretary Kerry is the author of best-selling books, including *A Call to Service: My Vision for a Better America* and *This Moment on Earth*, a book on the environment which he co-authored with his wife, Teresa Heinz Kerry. Together they are proud of a blended family that includes two daughters, three sons, and three grandchildren.

AS PREPARED – EMBARGOED UNTIL DELIVERY

SECRETARY OF DEFENSE CHUCK HAGEL
OPENING STATEMENT ON SYRIA
HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE
TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 10, 2013

Chairman McKeon, Ranking Member Smith, members of the committee.

The Department of Defense has a responsibility to protect the national security interests of the United States, and General Dempsey and I take these responsibilities very seriously.

That's why I strongly support President Obama's decision to respond to the Assad regime's chemical weapons attack on its own people, a large-scale and heinous sarin gas assault on innocent civilians, including women and children.

I also wholeheartedly support the President's decision to seek congressional authorization for the use of force in Syria.

The President has made clear that it is in our country's national security interest to degrade Assad's chemical weapons capabilities and deter him from using them again. As Secretary Kerry mentioned, yesterday we outlined a way to accomplish this objective and avert military action. It would require the Assad regime to swiftly turn its chemical weapons arsenal over to international control so it can be destroyed forever in a verifiable manner.

All of us are hopeful that this option could be a real solution to this crisis, yet we must be clear-eyed and ensure it is not a stalling tactic by Syria and its Russian patrons. And for this diplomatic option to have a chance of succeeding, the threat of U.S. military action must continue to be very real and credible. It was the President's determination to hold Assad accountable, and the fact that he put military action on the table, that enabled this new diplomatic track to gain momentum. The support of Congress for holding Assad accountable will give even more energy and urgency to these efforts.

So Congress has a responsibility to continue this important debate on authorizing the use of force against the Syrian regime.

As each of us knows, committing our country to using military force is the most difficult decision leaders can make.

All of those who are privileged to serve our nation have a responsibility to ask tough questions before that commitment is made.

We must be able to assure the American people that their leaders are acting according to U.S. national interests, with well-defined military objectives, and with an understanding of the risks and consequences involved.

The President, and his entire national security team, asked those difficult questions before we concluded that the United States should take military action against Syrian regime targets.

I want to address how we reached this decision by clarifying the U.S. interests at stake, our military objectives, and the risks of not acting at this critical juncture.

1. **U.S. National Interests**

As President Obama has said, the use of chemical weapons in Syria is not only an assault on humanity – it is a serious threat to America's national security interests and those of our closest allies.

The Syrian regime's actions risk eroding the longstanding international norm against the use of chemical weapons – a norm that has helped protect the United States homeland and American forces operating across the globe from these terrible weapons.

The weakening of this norm has grave consequences for our troops, our country's future security, and for global stability. These weapons are profoundly destabilizing and have rightfully been rejected by the international community.

Syria's use of chemical weapons also threatens our friends and partners along its borders – including Israel, Jordan, Turkey, Lebanon and Iraq. It increases the risks that terrorist groups like Hezbollah, which has forces in Syria supporting the Assad regime, could acquire chemical weapons. We must do all we can to prevent Hezbollah or any terrorist group determined to strike the United States from acquiring chemical weapons. And we cannot allow terrorist groups and authoritarian regimes to mistakenly believe that they can use chemical weapons against U.S. troops or America's friends and partners in the region without consequences.

Our allies throughout the world must be assured that the United States will stand by its security commitments and stand by its word. Our adversaries must not believe that they can develop and use weapons of mass destruction without consequences. A world where these adversaries are emboldened, instead of deterred, is not the world that we want to live in, as President Obama said last week.

For example, North Korea, with its massive stockpile of chemical weapons, threatens our treaty ally, the Republic of Korea, and the 28,000 U.S. troops stationed there. During my trip to Asia two weeks ago, I had a very serious and long conversation with South Korea's Defense Minister about the real threat that North Korea's chemical weapons presents to them and our troops.

2. U.S. Military Objectives

Given these threats to our national security, the United States must demonstrate through our actions that the use of chemical weapons is unacceptable.

The President has made clear that our military objectives in Syria would be to hold the Assad regime accountable for its chemical weapons attack, degrade its ability to carry out these kinds of attacks, and deter the regime from further use of chemical weapons.

The Department of Defense has developed military options to achieve these objectives, and we have positioned U.S. assets throughout the region to successfully execute this mission. We believe we can achieve them with a military action that would be targeted, consequential, and limited.

General Dempsey and I have assured the President that U.S. forces will be ready to act whenever the President gives the order. We are working to build broad international support for this effort. Last week at the G20, the leaders of a number of countries condemned this atrocity and called for a strong international response. In the days since, a number of other nations have also signed on to this statement.

In defining our military objectives, we have made clear that we are not seeking to resolve the underlying conflict in Syria through direct military force.

We will not send America's sons and daughters to fight another country's civil war. We are not contemplating any kind of open-ended intervention, or an operation involving ground forces.

A political solution created by the Syrian people is the only way to ultimately end the violence in Syria, and Secretary Kerry is helping lead international efforts to help the parties in Syria move towards a negotiated transition. We have also expanded our assistance to the moderate Syrian opposition.

The military action we are contemplating will reinforce this larger strategy – strengthening diplomatic efforts and making clear to Assad that he cannot achieve victory through further violence.

3. Risks of Inaction

Having defined America's interests and our military objectives, we also must examine the risks and consequences.

There are always risks in taking action, but there are also significant risks with inaction.

The Assad regime, under increasing pressure from the Syrian opposition and with a massive arsenal of chemical weapons, could feel empowered to carry out even more devastating chemical weapons attacks. This would deepen the refugee crisis faced by Syria's neighbors, and further destabilize the region.

A refusal to act would undermine the credibility of the United States – including the credibility of the President's commitment to prevent Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapon.

The word of the United States must mean something. It is vital currency in foreign relations and international and allied commitments.

Every witness here today – Secretary Kerry, General Dempsey, and myself – has served in uniform, fought in war, and seen its ugly realities up close. We understand that a country faces few decisions as grave as using military force. We are not unaware of the costs and ravages of war. But we also understand that America must protect its people and its national interests. That is our highest responsibility.

All of us who have the privilege and responsibility of serving this great nation owe the American people, and especially those wearing the uniform of our country, a vigorous debate on how America should respond to the horrific chemical weapons attack in Syria.

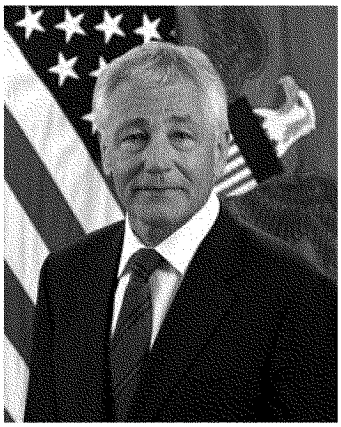
I know everyone on this committee agrees, and takes their responsibility of office just as seriously as the President and everyone at this table.

Thank you.

# # #

Chuck Hagel

Secretary of Defense



Chuck Hagel was sworn in as the 24th Secretary of Defense on February 27, 2013 becoming the first enlisted combat veteran to lead the Department of Defense.

Secretary Hagel was born on October 4, 1946 in North Platte, Nebraska, the eldest of four brothers. He joined the United States Army and volunteered to go to Vietnam, rising to the rank of Sergeant and serving as an infantry squad leader alongside his brother, Tom, with the Army's 9th Infantry Division in 1968. He earned numerous military decorations and honors, including two Purple Hearts.

Following his tour in Vietnam, Secretary Hagel graduated from the University of Nebraska at Omaha using the G.I. Bill. Continuing his commitment to public service, Secretary Hagel became Chief of Staff to Nebraska Congressman John Y. McCollister.

In 1981, Secretary Hagel was nominated by President Ronald Reagan to serve as Deputy Administrator of the Veterans Administration. In that post he helped pioneer early electronic health record keeping and pushed for increased benefits for Vietnam veterans suffering from Agent Orange. This fight became one of the causes of his life, later helping federal courts distribute hundreds of millions of dollars for Agent Orange victims through the Court settlement that set up the Agent Orange Payment Program which he chaired.

In the mid-1980's, Secretary Hagel co-founded Vanguard Cellular Systems, Inc., which became one of the largest independent cellular networks in the country. Secretary Hagel also served as President and CEO of the USO; the Chief Operating Officer of the 1990 Economic Summit of Industrialized Nations (G-7 Summit) in Houston, Texas; Deputy Commissioner General of the United States for the 1982 World's Fair, President of the Private Sector Council and President of McCarthy & Company, an Omaha based investment bank.

In 1996, Secretary Hagel was elected to the United States Senate and represented Nebraska until 2009. While in the Senate, he was a senior member of the Foreign Relations; Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs; and Intelligence Committees. He chaired the Foreign Relations International Economic Policy, Export and Trade Promotion Subcommittee; and the Banking Committee's International Trade and Finance, and Securities Subcommittees. Secretary Hagel also served as the Chairman of the Congressional-Executive Commission on China and the Senate Climate Change Observer Group.

Following his Senate career, Secretary Hagel served as Co-Chairman of President Obama's Intelligence Advisory Board and a member of the Secretary of Defense Policy Board. He was a Distinguished Professor in the Practice of National Governance at the Georgetown University School of Foreign Service and Chairman of the Atlantic Council, a non-partisan institution devoted to promoting transatlantic cooperation and international security. He also served on the board of PBS and a number of corporations and financial institutions.

Secretary Hagel is author of the 2008 book *America: Our Next Chapter*. He and his wife Lilibet have a daughter, Allyn, and a son, Ziller.

General Martin E. Dempsey

Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff

General Martin E. Dempsey becomes the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff after serving most recently as the Army's 37th Chief of Staff from 11 April 2011 through 7 September 2011.

Past assignments have taken him and his family across the globe during both peace and war from Platoon Leader to Combatant Commander. He is a 1974 graduate of the United States Military Academy and a career armor officer.

As a company grade officer, he served with the 2nd Cavalry in United States Army Europe and with the 10th Cavalry at Fort Carson. Following troop command he earned his Masters of Arts in English from Duke University and was assigned to the English Department at West Point. In 1991, GEN Dempsey deployed with the Third Armored Division in support of OPERATION DESERT STORM. Following DESERT STORM, he commanded 4th Battalion 67th Armor (Bandits) in Germany for two years and then departed to become Armor Branch Chief in US Army Personnel Command. From 1996-1998 he served as the 67th Colonel of the Third Armored Cavalry Regiment. Following this assignment as the Army's "senior scout" he served on the Joint Staff as an Assistant Deputy Director in J-5 and as Special Assistant to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. From September 2001 to June 2003, General Dempsey served in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia training and advising the Saudi Arabian National Guard. In June of 2003, General Dempsey took command of the 1st Armored Division in Baghdad, Iraq. After 14 months in Iraq, General Dempsey redeployed the division to Germany and completed his command tour in July of 2005. He then returned to Iraq for two years in August of 2005 to train and equip the Iraqi Security Forces as Commanding General of MNSTC-I. From August 2007 through October 2008, GEN Dempsey served as the Deputy Commander and then Acting Commander of U.S. Central Command. Before becoming Chief of Staff of the Army, he commanded US Army Training and Doctrine Command from December 2008-March 2011.

General Dempsey's awards and decorations include the Defense Distinguished Service Medal with Oak Leaf Cluster, the Distinguished Service Medal with three Oak Leaf Clusters, the Defense Superior Service Medal, the Legion of Merit with two Oak Leaf Clusters, the Bronze Star with "V" Device and Oak Leaf Cluster, the Combat Action Badge, and the Parachutist Badge. In addition to his Masters' Degree in English, he holds Masters' Degrees in Military Art and in National Security Studies.

General Dempsey and his high school sweetheart Deanie have three children: Chris, Megan, and Caitlin. Each has served in the United States Army. Chris remains on active duty. They have five wonderful grandchildren: Kayla and Mackenna by Chris and daughter-in-law Julie, Luke by Caitlin and son-in-law Shane, and Alexander and Hunter by Megan and son-in-law Kory. Chris and Julie are expecting their third child this fall.

DOCUMENTS SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

SEPTEMBER 10, 2013

United States Department of State

Washington, D.C. 20520

OCT 9 2013

Dear Mr. Chairman:

Pursuant to Section 6 of the Syria Accountability and Lebanese Sovereignty Restoration Act of 2003 (Public Law 108-175), we are forwarding a report on Syria's progress toward meeting the conditions described in paragraphs (1) through (4) of Section 5(d) of the Act.

This letter, including the enclosed report on Syria's progress towards meeting the described conditions, fulfills the reporting requirement set forth in the Act. The report includes details addressing Syria's support for terrorism, activities in Lebanon, pursuit and development of weapons of mass destruction and missiles, and support for and facilitation of terrorist activities inside of Iraq. It also reports on the specific terrorism-related concerns referred to in paragraphs (2) and (3) of Section 6(a) of the Act.

We hope this information is helpful to you. Please let us know if we can be of further assistance.

Sincerely,

Thomas B. Gibbons
Acting Assistant Secretary
Legislative Affairs

Enclosure:
As stated.

The Honorable
Edward R. Royce, Chairman,
Committee on Foreign Affairs,
House of Representatives.

Syria's Progress in Meeting the Conditions Contained in the Syria Accountability and Lebanese Sovereignty Restoration Act of 2003 (Public Law 108-175)

This report, submitted pursuant to Section 6 of the Syria Accountability and Lebanese Sovereignty Restoration Act of 2003 (Public Law 108-175) ("the Act"), reviews Syria's progress toward meeting the conditions described in paragraphs (1) through (4) of Section 5(d) of the Act. It also reports on the specific terrorism-related concerns referred to in paragraphs (2) and (3) of Section 6(a) of the Act.

President Bush issued Executive Order 13338 on May 11, 2004, implementing sanctions under the Act and declaring a national emergency due to Syria's support of terrorism, pursuit of weapons of mass destruction, occupation of Lebanon, and efforts to destabilize Iraq. Executive Order 13338 also blocks the property of individuals or entities designated by the Secretary of the Treasury, in consultation with the Secretary of State, for their involvement in Syria's provision of safe haven to terrorists and other designated individuals; military presence in Lebanon; pursuit of the development and production of chemical, biological, or nuclear weapons; or undermining of U.S. efforts with respect to the stabilization and reconstruction of Iraq. President Obama continued the national emergency forming the basis for Executive Order 13338 for an additional year on May 7, 2013.

Syria's progress toward meeting the conditions described in paragraphs 1 through 4 of Sections 5(d) of the Act.

In general, Syria has not taken steps to address the concerns contained in Section 5(d) of the Act, as detailed below.

Beginning in March 2011, Syrian protesters demanding democratic reforms and greater freedom were met with increasing brutality by Syrian regime security forces, leading to broad calls from the international community for the ouster of Bashar Asad's regime and increasing clashes with the armed opposition. Despite the regime's ostensive agreement to implement UN-Arab League Joint Special Envoy Lakhdar Brahimi's plan to negotiate a political solution based on the principles set out in the Geneva Communiqué, the Syrian regime continues to use extreme force against opposition forces and the Syrian people. Government actions include escalation of violence against its citizens; monitoring, harassment, and detention of political activists; and unlawful detention, torture, rape, denial of medical care, restriction of food and water, and repression of freedom of speech

and political expression. The UN estimates that more than 80,000 people have been killed since the unrest began. Many more have been arbitrarily arrested, and international human rights NGOs report thousands remain imprisoned despite occasional publicized releases of some prisoners.

In response, both the President and our European allies implemented tough measures sanctioning key members of the Syrian government; individuals directly and indirectly involved in human rights abuses; individuals and groups providing funding and other support to the regime; individuals and entities providing or operating technology that allows for monitoring, tracking, and targeting of political dissidents; and individuals and entities assisting the regime in evading U.S. sanctions. The United States has maintained economic pressure on the Syrian regime and will continue to pursue additional measures aimed at the Asad regime's financial lifelines.

5(d) (1) Syrian support for international terrorist groups.

Syria continues to provide political and material support to a number of designated terrorist groups, including the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP)-General Command and Hizballah. Hizballah's leaders have supported the Asad regime's repression and publicly acknowledged providing fighters and material support to Syrian security elements involved in attacks on opposition elements and civilians.

5(d) (2) Syria's continued occupation of Lebanon.

Syria's military and other security services formally withdrew from Lebanon in 2005. However, the Syrian regime, through its political and material support for Hizballah, continues to pose a direct challenge to the authority of the Lebanese state and the Lebanese government's stated policy of "dissociation" from the Syria crisis. The Syrian regime continues to exploit its relationship with Hizballah to influence the Lebanese government and undermine Lebanon's independence and sovereignty. Such influence poses significant challenges to Lebanon's stability. The Asad regime has repeatedly violated Lebanese sovereignty in the past year, with frequent shelling of Lebanese territory and cross-border incursions by its armed forces.

5(d)(3) Syria's development and deployment of medium- and long-range surface-to-surface ballistic missiles; pursuit of biological, chemical, or nuclear weapons; assurance that it will not pursue weapons of mass destruction in the

future; and agreement to allow the UN and other international observers to verify such actions and assurances.

The United States remains gravely concerned about Syria's weapons of mass destruction capabilities, especially its chemical weapons program and its use of ballistic missiles in the conflict. Syria has a stockpile of chemical weapons agents, which can be delivered by aircraft, ballistic missile, and artillery rocket. Our intelligence community has assessed with varying degrees of confidence that the Syrian regime has used these weapons on a small scale in Syria, specifically the chemical agent sarin. Additionally, the regime is the subject of an ongoing UN investigation into the use of chemical weapons, but it continues to deny critical access to Syrian territory or suspected sites. Syria began using ballistic missiles against opposition-controlled territory late last year and still maintains an inventory of several hundred SS-21, SCUD-B, and SCUD-C short-range ballistic missiles, though the missile inventories have been depleting. Over the past decade, Syria has focused on enhancing the capabilities of this force while achieving self-sufficiency in indigenous missile production. Nonetheless, Syria continues to depend on foreign suppliers for certain critical missile components, and foreign assistance is essential to Syria's missile development effort.

The United States continues to have serious concerns about Syria's past construction of an undeclared nuclear reactor. The U.S. government has expressed its concerns about Syria's undeclared nuclear activities through direct bilateral engagement with the Syrian government and at International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Board of Governors meetings. The United States has called on Syria to cooperate fully with the IAEA investigation into its undeclared nuclear activities. The IAEA's most recent report on Syria's nuclear program concluded: "It is very likely that the building destroyed at the Dair Alzour site was a nuclear reactor which should have been declared to the Agency." Based on these findings the IAEA Board of Governors found Syria in noncompliance with its international nuclear obligations in June 2011 and reported the matter to the UN Security Council (UNSC).

It is possible that Syria continues to develop biological warfare (BW) capabilities. Syria's biotechnical infrastructure is capable of supporting limited BW agent development, but the Syrians are not believed to have achieved a capability to put BW agents into effective weapons.[1] Syria is one of the few

[1] DNI, Annual Report to Congress on the Acquisition of Technology Related to WMD and Conventional Weapons, January 1, 2008 December 31, 2008.

remaining states not party to the Chemical Weapons Convention, though it has signed, but not ratified, the Biological Weapons Convention.

Since the uprising that began in March 2011, the United States has remained concerned about the security of Syria's suspected chemical weapons sites. As the ongoing violence in Syria continues, there remains the possibility the Asad regime would transfer, fail to secure, or continue to use these weapons.

5(d)(4) The Government of Syria's support for, and facilitation of, terrorist activities inside of Iraq, including the use of territory under its control by any means whatsoever to support those engaged in terrorist activities inside of Iraq.

The number of foreign fighters from extremist groups, including those affiliated with al-Qaida in Iraq, transiting through Syrian territory into Iraq has reversed direction to a certain degree, with Iraq-based militants now entering the Syrian theater to participate in the conflict in Syria.

Terrorism-Related Concerns Referred to in paragraphs (2) and (3) of Section 6(a) of the Act, specifically any connections between individual terrorists and terrorist groups operating in Syria or Lebanon with terrorist attacks on the United States, U.S. citizens or installations, or U.S. allies.

Several major terrorist organizations, including Hizballah, Palestinian Islamic Jihad, PFLP, and PFLP-General Command, maintain a significant presence in Syria and Lebanon. Elements or entities associated with some of these groups have continued to plan and carry out terrorist attacks against Israeli civilian and military targets. Hizballah continues to provide material support and guidance to other terrorist groups for attacks against Israel, and, as noted earlier in this report, has also assisted the Syrian regime in its brutal crackdown of the continued uprising. Hizballah also retains the capacity to attack targets around the world. Additionally, the Syrian regime's inability to maintain stability and peace within its territory has allowed other U.S.-designated foreign terrorist organizations to flourish, including the al-Nusrah front.

6(a)(3) How the United States is increasing its efforts against Hizballah and other terrorist organizations supported by Syria.

The United States continues to vigorously enforce the broad range of economic sanctions and use targeted diplomatic actions to cut off funding and

supplies to Hizballah and terrorist groups operating in Syria and Lebanon. The United States strictly enforces terrorism-financing provisions of U.S. law and has exercised its authority under U.S. law to designate persons and entities for their terrorist activities and their support for terrorism in Syria and Lebanon. Working closely with our international partners, U.S. diplomatic outreach plays a key role in preventing Syria and Hizballah from procuring weapons and military technology from foreign suppliers.

The Commercial Bank of Syria (CBS) was designated as being of "primary money laundering concern" on May 11, 2004, pursuant to Section 311 of the USA PATRIOT Act based on money laundering and terrorism finance concerns. This rule requires U.S. financial institutions to sever their correspondent relationships with CBS. On February 10, 2011, the Lebanese Canadian Bank was also designated under Section 311 based on money laundering and terrorism finance concerns. Additionally, on August 17, 2011, the President signed E.O. 13582, which enacted new sanctions in response to Hizballah's support to the Government of Syria. On April 23, 2013, two Lebanese exchange houses, Kassem Rmeiti & Co. For Exchange (Rmeiti Exchange) and Halawi Exchange Co. (Halawi Exchange), were identified as foreign financial institutions of primary money laundering concern – the first time Section 311 has been used against a non-bank financial institution.

On September 2, 2004, with U.S. sponsorship, the UNSC adopted Resolution 1559, which called for, among other things, the immediate disarming of all militias (i.e., Hizballah and other groups) in Lebanon. The United States has demanded on many occasions the Syrian government halt the re-supply of weapons and materiel to Hizballah through Syria, but the flow continues. The unanimous passage of UNSCR 1701 on August 11, 2006, also co-sponsored by the United States, reinforced the international community's priority for the implementation of the arms embargo in Lebanon, expanded the size and mandate of the UN Interim Force in Lebanon, and facilitated the deployment of the Lebanese Armed Forces south of the Litani River for the first time in 40 years.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MEMBERS POST HEARING

SEPTEMBER 10, 2013

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MR. JONES

Mr. JONES. Can you assure me that we have developed contingency plans for any reaction from Syria on its neighbors. . . . any reaction from Hezbollah against Israel . . . any move by Iran, Russia, China, etc.? I know you can't articulate those plans but do you honestly have them.

Secretary KERRY. Yes. Let me assure you that we have planned for a variety of contingencies. However, I cannot get into the details of our planning. Of course we are updating and reevaluating our plans continually to ensure that the President has the best options available.

Mr. JONES. Why is this operation in our vital national interests . . . understanding that credibility of the Commander in Chief is not a vital national interest, and neither are the pictures of dead and wounded citizens (we learned that lesson from Somalia), and neither are suspected gas stockpiles. If you believe this is in our vital national interest, please provide your definition of the term.

Secretary KERRY. The proposed military action would further the interests of the United States. It serves our vital national security interests in several ways. First, the President has made clear that Syria's violation of established international norms against chemical weapons use runs counter to the vital national security interests of the United States and cannot be tolerated. Second, the proposed military action would deter future use of chemical weapons in this conflict and future conflicts by making clear that we will not tolerate a violation of this kind. And third, any U.S. response would convey to Iran and others that the United States has both the military capability and the political will to protect its security interests—and when the United States draws redlines and says that all options are on the table to enforce them, we mean what we say.

Mr. JONES. Can you assure me that we have developed contingency plans for any reaction from Syria on its neighbors. . . . any reaction from Hezbollah against Israel . . . any move by Iran, Russia, China, etc.? I know you can't articulate those plans but do you honestly have them.

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General DEMPSEY. Any military action would be focused on deterring and degrading future use of chemical weapons which I believe is in the best interest of our nation. To allow the international community to lower the threshold for acceptable use of chemical weapons exposes our military men and women to possible use against them in the future.

Mr. JONES. With your allegiance being to the U.S. Constitution, and with the understanding that when asked your opinion on a matter that you would give it honestly, do you believe that this action is in the best interests of our nation and our military?

General DEMPSEY. Any military action would be focused on deterring and degrading future use of chemical weapons which I believe is in the best interest of our nation. To allow the international community to lower the threshold for acceptable use of chemical weapons exposes our military men and women to possible use against them in the future.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MR. GARAMENDI

Mr. GARAMENDI. The proposed U.S. strikes are intended to merely deter Assad from using chemical weapons and degrade, but not eliminate, his capacity to do so. The objective of the current diplomatic solution that you suggested, and the Russians embraced, would be to actually remove the weapons from Assad's control and destroy them. Would you agree that this would be a better and more secure outcome than "deterring and degrading"?

Secretary KERRY. [The information was not available at the time of printing.]

Mr. GARAMENDI. As President Obama noted in an interview last night, the Iranians despise chemical weapons, having been a victim of them. The Russians are also opposed to the use of chemical weapons. Obama suggested that the Syrian regime's allies likely have seen the recent chemical weapons attacks as a mistake. How could we best work with those stakeholders in the conflict to pursue a diplomatic solution?

Secretary KERRY. [The information was not available at the time of printing.]

Mr. GARAMENDI. The Administration has repeatedly affirmed that there is no military solution to the civil war in Syria. Can you elaborate on the political negotiations underway?

Secretary KERRY. [The information was not available at the time of printing.]

Mr. GARAMENDI. What are the specific goals of a U.S. military strike against Syria? How will we assess if we have met these objectives? If we do not meet these objectives, do we plan to engage in further military actions to try to achieve them?

Secretary KERRY. The President has been clear about the specific objectives and scope of any military strikes in Syria. These strikes would be narrowly focused on deterring further use of chemical weapons (CW) by the Assad regime; degrading the regime's ability to use CW; and upholding a clearly established international norm against the use of such weapons. Any such military response would not involve U.S. boots on the ground in Syria.

The success of military action would be assessed based on its effectiveness in deterring the Assad regime from using CW again and degrading its ability to do so, as well as further deterring others who might consider using CW.

Mr. GARAMENDI. What do we expect the military actions being proposed by the Administration will cost? Please suggest a high end and a low end estimate.

Secretary KERRY. [The information was not available at the time of printing.]

Mr. GARAMENDI. I understand that one of the objectives of proposed military strikes is to "degrade" but not eliminate the Syrian regime's capabilities to deploy chemical weapons. Does this mean that Assad would retain some capacity to use chemical weapons after a U.S. bombing campaign? What military actions might the U.S. undertake if Assad uses chemical weapons after U.S. military strikes?

Secretary KERRY. [The information was not available at the time of printing.]

Mr. GARAMENDI. How many different groups comprise the Syrian opposition? In your estimate, what portion of the fighters would be considered so-called "moderates," amenable to U.S. interests and open to a pluralistic Syrian society? What role do other "extremist" groups play within the opposition? If U.S. military actions were to destabilize and ultimately help topple the Syrian regime, how could we be sure that the moderate groups within the rebel coalition would take control of the country?

Secretary KERRY. [The information was not available at the time of printing.]

Mr. GARAMENDI. There has also been much discussion of providing arms to selected groups within the rebel coalition. What processes do we have for vetting the groups that would receive U.S. military support? How could we guarantee that U.S. military assistance would stay in the right hands? What assurances do we have that weapons would be properly used and secured?

Secretary KERRY. [The information was not available at the time of printing.]

Mr. GARAMENDI. Can you assess how U.S. military strikes might impact Iran's or Russia's military support for the Syrian regime?

Secretary KERRY. [The information was not available at the time of printing.]

Mr. GARAMENDI. If the Syrian regime responds to U.S. strikes by attacking Israel, Jordan, or Turkey, what range of military actions would the U.S. consider in response? Do we have a plan in place for this contingency? Does it include the possibility of U.S. troops on the ground? How might these and other countries in the region, including specifically Lebanon and Iraq, be affected by, and potentially respond to, an escalation of the current conflict?

Secretary KERRY. We are working closely with our allies and partners in the region to ensure that we are prepared in case of a counterattack. We are postured in the region to respond to a variety of threats. The President has been clear about his desire not to put U.S. boots on the ground in Syria.

I cannot speak for other nations' responses to escalation. We are continuing to work with those neighbors on ways to reduce the impact of the Syria conflict and to ensure we can effectively address any escalation that might occur after a potential strike. I cannot get into more detail here, but I am happy to discuss further in a classified setting.

Mr. GARAMENDI. How might a U.S. strike impact the current refugee crisis? In a recent letter, Chairman Dempsey suggested that the cost of U.S. strikes on Syria would be "in the billions." How might these billions be used to help alleviate the humanitarian disaster and instability within neighboring countries that has resulted from millions of Syrians being driven from their homes by this ongoing civil war?

Secretary KERRY. [The information was not available at the time of printing.]

Mr. GARAMENDI. What are the specific goals of a U.S. military strike against Syria? How will we assess if we have met these objectives? If we do not meet these objectives, do we plan to engage in further military actions to try to achieve them?

Secretary HAGEL. The President has been clear about the specific objectives and scope of any military strikes in Syria. These strikes would be narrowly focused on deterring further use of chemical weapons (CW) by the Assad regime; degrading the regime's ability to use CW; and upholding a clearly established international norm against the use of such weapons. Any such military response would not involve U.S. boots on the ground in Syria.

The success of military action would be assessed based on its effectiveness in deterring the Assad regime from using CW again and degrading its ability to do so, as well as further deterring others who might consider using CW.

Mr. GARAMENDI. What do we expect the military actions being proposed by the Administration will cost? Please suggest a high end and a low end estimate.

Secretary HAGEL. The President's guidance is that the operations in Syria be limited in scope, and we expect the costs to be limited as well. Costs will depend on the details of the operation. A reasonable range of costs is tens to hundreds of millions of dollars. I cannot be more precise at this time.

Mr. GARAMENDI. I understand that one of the objectives of proposed military strikes is to "degrade" but not eliminate the Syrian regime's capabilities to deploy chemical weapons. Does this mean that Assad would retain some capacity to use chemical weapons after a U.S. bombing campaign? What military actions might the U.S. undertake if Assad uses chemical weapons after U.S. military strikes?

Secretary HAGEL. The President has been clear about the scope and objectives of military strikes in Syria. These strikes would be narrowly focused on deterring further use of chemical weapons (CW) by the Assad regime; degrading the regime's ability to use CW; and upholding a clearly established international norm against the use of such weapons. Any such military response would not involve U.S. boots on the ground in Syria.

Even following military strikes, Assad may retain some capability to use chemical weapons. No military strike option could eliminate Syria's entire CW stockpile. The objective in undertaking such military action, however, would be to deter him from using these weapons again. The President has been clear that he will not tolerate use of chemical weapons. I cannot say what the President would do if this happens again, but we do continue to plan for a variety of contingencies.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Previously, the Pentagon estimated that 75,000 troops would be required to seize the Syrian weapons compounds. Can you expand upon what kinds of military actions would be required to actually secure Syria's chemical weapons and make sure that extremist elements within Syria would not have access to these weapons? What would this kind of an operation cost?

Secretary HAGEL. I cannot get into the details of such a mission in this setting, but the Department would be glad to brief you on those details in a closed session. A mission of this scope would require significant funding in order to execute such a mission, particularly during the current budget environment brought on by the sequester.

Mr. GARAMENDI. DOD officials have confirmed that if the U.S. launches the proposed military strikes against Syria, we should expect "collateral damage." Can you give any estimate or range of how many Syrian civilians could be killed in a U.S. strike? Can you assess how the image of these deaths might impact recruitment within extremist groups that present a threat to the United States?

Secretary HAGEL. In this proposed mission, as in all others, U.S. military planners take all appropriate steps to minimize collateral damage from any military strikes to the greatest extent possible. I do not have more specific ranges at this time.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Can you assess how U.S. military strikes might impact Iran's or Russia's military support for the Syrian regime?

Secretary HAGEL. [The information referred to is classified and retained in the committee files.]

Mr. GARAMENDI. If the Syrian regime responds to U.S. strikes by attacking Israel, Jordan, or Turkey, what range of military actions would the U.S. consider in response? Do we have a plan in place for this contingency? Does it include the possibility of U.S. troops on the ground? How might these and other countries in the region, including specifically Lebanon and Iraq, be affected by, and potentially respond to, an escalation of the current conflict?

Secretary HAGEL. We are working closely with our allies and partners in the region to ensure that we are prepared in case of a counterattack. We are postured in the region to respond to a variety of threats. The President has been clear about his desire not to put U.S. boots on the ground in Syria.

I cannot speak for other nations' responses to escalation. We are continuing to work with those neighbors on ways to reduce the impact of the Syria conflict and to ensure we can effectively address any escalation that might occur after a potential strike. I cannot get into more detail here, but I am happy to discuss further in a classified setting.

Mr. GARAMENDI. What are the specific goals of a U.S. military strike against Syria? How will we assess if we have met these objectives? If we do not meet these objectives, do we plan to engage in further military actions to try to achieve them?

General DEMPSEY. [The information referred to is classified and retained in the committee files.]

Mr. GARAMENDI. What do we expect the military actions being proposed by the Administration will cost? Please suggest a high end and a low end estimate.

General DEMPSEY. The direct costs could vary widely, but will be proportional to the limited scope of the strikes; several hundred million dollars likely.

Mr. GARAMENDI. I understand that one of the objectives of proposed military strikes is to "degrade" but not eliminate the Syrian regime's capabilities to deploy chemical weapons. Does this mean that Assad would retain some capacity to use chemical weapons after a U.S. bombing campaign? What military actions might the U.S. undertake if Assad uses chemical weapons after U.S. military strikes?

General DEMPSEY. The military effort to deter and degrade Assad's ability to employ chemical weapons in the future is limited in scope and will not completely eliminate Syria's ability to deploy chemical weapons should it choose to do so. Potential future U.S. military actions beyond the proposed strikes are predicated on the President's purpose at that time, informed by the evolving situation.

Mr. GARAMENDI. We have been told that the Assad regime retains a relatively robust system of command and control over the chemical weapons, which is partially why our intelligence community feels confident that we can assign responsibility to Assad for the August 21 chemical attacks. How might U.S. strikes impact that command and control structure? Is it possible that if strikes fragment or destabilize the regime, this might expand and diversify the range of actors either within the Assad regime or beyond with access to and control over the weapons?

General DEMPSEY. [The information referred to is classified and retained in the committee files.]

Mr. GARAMENDI. Previously, the Pentagon estimated that 75,000 troops would be required to seize the Syrian weapons compounds. Can you expand upon what kinds of military actions would be required to actually secure Syria's chemical weapons and make sure that extremist elements within Syria would not have access to these weapons? What would this kind of an operation cost?

General DEMPSEY. [The information referred to is classified and retained in the committee files.]

Mr. GARAMENDI. DOD officials have confirmed that if the U.S. launches the proposed military strikes against Syria, we should expect "collateral damage." Can you give any estimate or range of how many Syrian civilians could be killed in a U.S. strike? Can you assess how the image of these deaths might impact recruitment within extremist groups that present a threat to the United States?

General DEMPSEY. [The information referred to is classified and retained in the committee files.]

Mr. GARAMENDI. Can you assess how U.S. military strikes might impact Iran's or Russia's military support for the Syrian regime?

General DEMPSEY. [The information referred to is classified and retained in the committee files.]

Mr. GARAMENDI. If the Syrian regime responds to U.S. strikes by attacking Israel, Jordan, or Turkey, what range of military actions would the U.S. consider in response? Do we have a plan in place for this contingency? Does it include the possibility of U.S. troops on the ground? How might these and other countries in the region, including specifically Lebanon and Iraq, be affected by, and potentially respond to, an escalation of the current conflict?

General DEMPSEY. [The information referred to is classified and retained in the committee files.]

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MS. SPEIER

Ms. SPEIER. Please describe what you see as the advantages and disadvantages of referring Assad to the International Criminal Court. Is this something Russia might consider supporting in order to avoid U.S. military intervention?

Secretary KERRY. [The information was not available at the time of printing.]

Ms. SPEIER. Assuming the Syrian government cooperates, how long would it take the international community to find and secure Syria's chemical weapons stockpile?

Secretary KERRY. [The information was not available at the time of printing.]

Ms. SPEIER. Assuming the Syrian government cooperates, how long would it take the international community to find and secure Syria's chemical weapons stockpile?

General DEMPSEY. The OPCW Executive Council Decision on 27 September makes it very clear that the entire Syrian CW stockpile will be inspected NLT 1 NOV, with all production and mixing/filling equipment destroyed at that time. "Securing" the stockpile is not a part of the mandate, however completion of the inspections, thus identifying the details of the stockpile, could/should include securing the sites until elimination operations begin (must be complete by June 2014).

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MR. BARBER

Mr. BARBER. What are the strategic objectives that the President's proposed military actions are designed to secure? How are the proposed actions designed to meet those objectives and what would constitute success in the eyes of the administration?

Secretary KERRY. [The information was not available at the time of printing.]

Mr. BARBER. If the United States is able to measurably degrade and deter the Assad regime from using chemical weapons, how does that specifically advance our broader policy objectives in Syria, in the region, and internationally?

Secretary KERRY. [The information was not available at the time of printing.]

Mr. BARBER. If the United States takes military action but fails to deter Assad from using chemical weapons in the future, how do you specifically see that affecting our objectives in the region? What is the United States' next step?

Secretary KERRY. [The information was not available at the time of printing.]

Mr. BARBER. Can you detail the efforts the State Department has taken to encourage international participation in a military response to Assad's use of chemical weapons in Syria and what has the response been? What allies have committed military assets in response?

Secretary KERRY. [The information was not available at the time of printing.]

Mr. BARBER. What are the strategic objectives that the President's proposed military actions are designed to secure? How are the proposed actions designed to meet those objectives and what would constitute success in the eyes of the administration?

Secretary HAGEL. The President has been clear about the scope and objective of any possible military strikes in Syria. These strikes would be narrowly focused on the following strategic objectives: deterring further use of chemical weapons (CW) by the Assad regime; degrading the regime's ability to use CW; and upholding a clearly established international norm against the use of such weapons. Although I cannot get into the details of our planning, our military response would not involve U.S. boots on the ground in Syria.

Success of military action would be assessed based on its effectiveness in deterring the Assad regime from using CW again and degrading its ability to do so, as well as further deterring others who might consider using CW.

Mr. BARBER. If the United States takes military action but fails to deter Assad from using chemical weapons in the future, how do you specifically see that affecting our objectives in the region? What is the United States' next step?

Secretary HAGEL. By degrading Assad's chemical weapons capability and deterring the future use of these weapons, military action would make clear to Assad that he will be held accountable for using chemical weapons as a means of waging war against his own people. Limiting Assad's ability to threaten the Syrian people with chemical weapons would weaken his hand and strengthen theirs.

The President has very clearly stated that there will be consequences if Assad either further used chemical weapons or allowed those weapons to proliferate. As such, it is imperative that we demonstrate our seriousness about Assad's use of these weapons so that he does not feel emboldened to transfer those same weapons to extremist groups. There is risk in action, but the risks of inaction are even greater.

We are prepared if the Assad regime conducts counterattacks, and we are postured in the region to respond to a variety of threats.

Mr. BARBER. President Assad has continued to move his military assets around the country playing what some consider elaborate shell games with Syrian Armed Forces, his chemical weapons, and innocent civilians. How is the Department proposing to engage legitimate military targets and deny terrorist groups the ability to gain control of chemical weapons while simultaneously avoiding civilian casualties?

Secretary HAGEL. The proposed limited strikes would be narrowly focused on deterring further use of CW by the Assad regime; degrading the regime's ability to use CW; and upholding a clearly established international norm against the use of such weapons.

Without getting into the details of military planning or collateral damage estimates, I can say that our defense planners work diligently to ensure minimal damage under all of the options they are developing.

Mr. BARBER. What are the strategic objectives that the President's proposed military actions are designed to secure? How are the proposed actions designed to meet those objectives and what would constitute success in the eyes of the administration?

General DEMPSEY. [The information was not available at the time of printing.]

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MR. CARSON

Mr. CARSON. Can you elaborate on some reports we have heard about the impact of refugees on Syria's neighbors—including that nearly one quarter of Lebanon's population is now refugees and that refugees are straining Jordan's economy to a breaking point? How might the strain of refugees impact the the short- and long-term ability of regional partners to participate in a strike?

Secretary KERRY. [The information was not available at the time of printing.]

Mr. CARSON. What specific military resources and capabilities will our regional partners bring to an operation in Syria? Has this support been pledged already or are we still negotiating what this may entail? In the event of a counter strike or escalation, do you believe that our partners would continue to provide this support?

Secretary HAGEL. Other countries, including France, have expressed interest in contributing to military operations in response to Syria's use of chemical weapons against the civilian population. We are continuing to engage with several Arab countries about their potential roles. A number of countries and organizations, including the Arab League, have joined us in condemning the Assad regime's heinous acts. Seven countries have publicly gone on record in support of U.S. military action even without a Security Council mandate. They are France, Canada, Australia, Turkey, Denmark, Kosovo, and Albania.

In an unclassified forum, I cannot get into specifics regarding what each country would contribute or their operational roles, but I would be glad to brief you in a classified setting.

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Secretary HAGEL. The humanitarian situation resulting from the conflict in Syria is very serious and relieving the suffering of Syrian civilians is critical. In addition to the challenge of providing relief to Syria's more than 5 million internally displaced persons, there are more than 2.1 million registered Syrian refugees in Leb-

anon, Jordan, Turkey, Iraq and Egypt. Lebanon, Jordan and Turkey have indeed borne the brunt of the refugee flow.

This is why the United States has donated more humanitarian assistance than any other single donor—more than $1 billion to date—to help the Syrian people, including internally displaced persons and refugees.

Although the strain of refugees clearly impacts Syria's neighbors, I defer to the Intelligence Community to assess the specific impact on those countries' military readiness.

Mr. CARSON. What specific military resources and capabilities will our regional partners bring to an operation in Syria? Has this support been pledged already or are we still negotiating what this may entail? In the event of a counter strike or escalation, do you believe that our partners would continue to provide this support?

General DEMPSEY. [The information referred to is classified and retained in the committee files.]

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MR. GIBSON

Mr. GIBSON. Thank you for your testimony before the House Armed Services Committee today, and for your service to this great nation. I regret that I did not have the opportunity to ask you questions today. Here, for the record, are my questions, and I appreciate your prompt responses.

My question is to General Dempsey. I am looking for the analysis from the "war game" from the Joint Staff. If the responses need to be classified, I am more than willing to read the response in a SCIF.

Specifically, I am interested in the following answers, with the risk level defined for each response (i.e. very low, low, moderate, high, very high):

In the Joint Staff's war games analysis, after a military strike by the United States on Syria, what is the risk, and level of that risk, that the Assad regime will conduct another chemical attack against their people and deny it once again?

General DEMPSEY. [The information referred to is classified and retained in the committee files.]

Mr. GIBSON. In the Joint Staff's war games analysis, what is the risk, and level of that risk, of a retaliatory attack on Israel? How would these attacks play out according to the Joint Staff war games? How would other actors (i.e. Israel, Russia, Iran, USA) react to this attack?

General DEMPSEY. [The information referred to is classified and retained in the committee files.]

Mr. GIBSON. In the Joint Staff's war games analysis, if the Administration moves ahead with the military strike, what is the risk, and level of that risk, of attacks on the United States, including the homeland and overseas targets such as bases, embassies, private industry, and other outposts? Please delineate risk levels between the different targets.

General DEMPSEY. [The information referred to is classified and retained in the committee files.]

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MS. DUCKWORTH

Ms. DUCKWORTH. What is the criteria for measuring the success of any specific planned action? It isn't regime change or attacking their chemical weapon compounds, so how are we going to measure a successful mission? If the attacks are not meant to topple Assad and he reverts back to using his conventional weapons, how would you quantify the effects of a successful strike? I have heard inclusion of an attack on the Syrians' ability to retaliate against rebel forces. How will this be measured? Does this mean there is a plan to attack Syrian conventional forces? How is that not going to affect the dynamics of the civil war there?

Secretary KERRY. [The information was not available at the time of printing.]

Ms. DUCKWORTH. The AUMF clearly states "no boots on the ground" as part of a retaliatory strike. "The authority granted in section 2(a) does not authorize the use of the United States Armed Forces on the ground in Syria for the purpose of combat operations." Additionally, Administration officials have been abundantly clear on this front in numerous settings and on numerous occasions, but in testimony in front of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Secretary Kerry addressed a hypothetical dynamic of an "imploding Syria" in which boots on the ground could be used in order to prevent WMD from falling into enemy hands.

Secretary Kerry said: in the event Syria imploded, for instance, or in the event there was a threat of a chemical weapons cache falling into the hands of Al-Nusra or someone else, and it was clearly in the interests of our allies and all of us—the

British, the French and others—to prevent those weapons of mass destruction falling into the hands of the worst elements, I don't want to take off the table an option that might or might not be available to a President of the United States to secure our country.

Furthermore, in April, Secretary Hagel testified to the Senate Armed Services Committee that the 200+ troops from the 1st Armored Division, will work alongside Jordanian forces to "improve readiness and prepare for a number of scenarios" and that the Pentagon had the capability to expand the forces to 20,000 in order to secure chemical weapons in Syria or if the President chooses to enter into the Syrian conflict. Is this mission for this 1st Armored Division cell still active? Doesn't this run counter to the "no boots on the ground" planning of the authorization you are seeking? And what are the nature of the "number of scenarios" that the Secretary testified to? As presently postured, are current troop levels in the region sufficient to deal with these different scenarios?

Secretary KERRY. [The information was not available at the time of printing.]

Ms. DUCKWORTH. To what extent have various types of possible, boots on the ground scenarios (as referenced to in my above question and as testified to by Secretary Kerry) been thought about and "red-teamed"? Does the President have additional or other authorizing mechanisms at his disposal that would allow immediate action to prevent WMD from falling into Al Qaeda, Al Nusra etc. hands? Has the administration calculated the potential cost in terms of troops needed and military resources needed for the various red-teamed contingency scenarios?

Chemical weapons falling into the hands of extremist elements is a worst-case scenario, but nevertheless a very real concern—one that needs to be given careful consideration—given the possible destabilizing effects of military intervention. To what extent have negotiations taken place with our Arab League allies about their possible support of a mission to secure loose WMD in Syria? Are our Gulf State allies (Kuwait, UAE, Qatar, Turkey, Saudi Arabia) prepared and committed to provide forces (ground troops, air strike capability, etc.) in order to support our efforts? Where do these current diplomatic efforts stand and what is the extent/nature of their willingness to support?

Secretary KERRY. [The information was not available at the time of printing.]

Ms. DUCKWORTH. What is the criteria for measuring the success of any specific planned action? It isn't regime change or attacking their chemical weapon compounds, so how are we going to measure a successful mission? If the attacks are not meant to topple Assad and he reverts back to using his conventional weapons, how would you quantify the effects of a successful strike? I have heard inclusion of an attack on the Syrians' ability to retaliate against rebel forces. How will this be measured? Does this mean there is a plan to attack Syrian conventional forces? How is that not going to affect the dynamics of the civil war there?

Secretary HAGEL. The President has been clear about the scope and objective of possible military strikes in Syria. These strikes would be narrowly focused on deterring further use of chemical weapons (CW) by the Assad regime; degrading the regime's ability to use CW; and upholding a clearly established international norm against the use of such weapons.

The President has decided that a military response to the Syrian regime's use of CW should be limited and proportional. The President has made clear that this would not be an open-ended intervention, and that we would not put boots on the ground in Syria. This has not changed.

Success of military action would be assessed based on its effectiveness in deterring the Assad regime from using CW again and degrading its ability to do so, as well as further deterring others who might consider using CW.

Ms. DUCKWORTH. The AUMF clearly states "no boots on the ground" as part of a retaliatory strike. "The authority granted in section 2(a) does not authorize the use of the United States Armed Forces on the ground in Syria for the purpose of combat operations." Additionally, Administration officials have been abundantly clear on this front in numerous settings and on numerous occasions, but in testimony in front of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Secretary Kerry addressed a hypothetical dynamic of an "imploding Syria" in which boots on the ground could be used in order to prevent WMD from falling into enemy hands.

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Secretary HAGEL. The President has decided that any U.S. military response to the Syrian regime's use of chemical weapons (CW) should be limited and proportional. The President has made clear that this would not be an open-ended intervention, and that we would not put boots on the ground in Syria. This has not changed.

The United States has maintained robust defense relationships with Syria's neighbors for many years. This includes elements of the 1st Armored Division headquarters, as well as other military assets, currently stationed in Jordan. In addition to sharing intelligence, liaising with their Jordanian counterparts, and consulting on regional security issues, part of this element's mission is to facilitate planning for a variety of scenarios related to the ongoing crisis in Syria, including humanitarian assistance. As you can appreciate, I cannot get into the details of military planning in an unclassified forum.

Although the President has not made any decisions about specific assets to use in a potential strike on Syria, we have sufficiently postured naval and air assets in the region to achieve these objectives. Those forces are there under normal rotational or stationing arrangements.

Ms. DUCKWORTH. To what extent have various types of possible, boots on the ground scenarios (as referenced to in my above question and as testified to by Secretary Kerry) been thought about and "red-teamed"? Does the President have additional or other authorizing mechanisms at his disposal that would allow immediate action to prevent WMD from falling into Al Qaeda, Al Nusra etc. hands? Has the administration calculated the potential cost in terms of troops needed and military resources needed for the various red-teamed contingency scenarios?

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Secretary HAGEL. Both the President and I share your concerns about WMD falling into the hands of terrorist or extremist organizations. I cannot get into the specifics of our planning, but let me assure you that we are planning for a variety of contingencies. The Department would be happy to provide more details in a closed setting. The President has made clear to the Assad regime that it will be held accountable if the regime's chemical weapons are allowed to proliferate to extremist groups. We are also actively engaging with our partners in the region to ensure they are aware of our concerns about the spread of these terrible weapons. Additionally, we are using Cooperative Threat Reduction (CTR) Program funds to assist Syria's neighbors with efforts to prevent and, if needed, detect the proliferation of WMD across their borders. Those nations understand our concerns and have voiced a willingness to help prevent these weapons from spreading. I can also assure you that we will continue to make non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction a priority for as long as needed.

Ms. DUCKWORTH. What is the criteria for measuring the success of any specific planned action? It isn't regime change or attacking their chemical weapon compounds, so how are we going to measure a successful mission? If the attacks are not meant to topple Assad and he reverts back to using his conventional weapons, how would you quantify the effects of a successful strike? I have heard inclusion of an attack on the Syrians' ability to retaliate against rebel forces. How will this be measured? Does this mean there is a plan to attack Syrian conventional forces? How is that not going to affect the dynamics of the civil war there?

General DEMPSEY. [The information referred to is classified and retained in the committee files.]

Ms. DUCKWORTH. The AUMF clearly states "no boots on the ground" as part of a retaliatory strike. "The authority granted in section 2(a) does not authorize the

use of the United States Armed Forces on the ground in Syria for the purpose of combat operations." Additionally, Administration officials have been abundantly clear on this front in numerous settings and on numerous occasions, but in testimony in front of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Secretary Kerry addressed a hypothetical dynamic of an "imploding Syria" in which boots on the ground could be used in order to prevent WMD from falling into enemy hands.

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Furthermore, in April, Secretary Hagel testified to the Senate Armed Services Committee that the 200+ troops from the 1st Armored Division, will work alongside Jordanian forces to "improve readiness and prepare for a number of scenarios" and that the Pentagon had the capability to expand the forces to 20,000 in order to secure chemical weapons in Syria or if the President chooses to enter into the Syrian conflict. Is this mission for this 1st Armored Division cell still active?

General DEMPSEY. There is a military headquarters element deployed to Jordan consisting of approximately 300 U.S. personnel. These personnel participate in military-to-military engagements and conduct planning with the Jordanian Armed Forces. If the situation in Syria deteriorates, this headquarters element could provide a Command and Control capability in support of military operations, but the main purpose of the HQs is to build trust with and demonstrate commitment to the Jordanian Armed Forces.

Ms. DUCKWORTH. Doesn't this run counter to the "no boots on the ground" planning of the authorization you are seeking?

General DEMPSEY. As it stands, these forces are not in violation of the "no boots on the ground" policy since they are based in Jordan and have no authority to enter into Syria.

Ms. DUCKWORTH. And what are the nature of the "number of scenarios" that the Secretary testified to?

General DEMPSEY. Prudent military planning has been conducted since the conflict in Syria started over two years ago. These efforts will continue as the situation in Syria develops. Multiple plans have been and are being developed and refined to provide options to the President. The U.S. military is conducting planning with potential partner nations for all possible contingencies so that we can respond appropriately to any situation, consistent with our national interests.

Ms. DUCKWORTH. As presently postured, are current troop levels in the region sufficient to deal with these different scenarios?

General DEMPSEY. The number of personnel required to effectively respond to any of the contemplated scenarios varies. The force levels could remain unchanged or increase depending on the response selected by the President of the United States.

Ms. DUCKWORTH. To what extent have various types of possible, boots on the ground scenarios (as referenced to in my above question and as testified to by Secretary Kerry) been thought about and "red-teamed"? Does the President have additional or other authorizing mechanisms at his disposal that would allow immediate action to prevent WMD from falling into Al Qaeda, Al Nusra etc. hands? Has the administration calculated the potential cost in terms of troops needed and military resources needed for the various red-teamed contingency scenarios?

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General DEMPSEY. [The information referred to is classified and retained in the committee files.]

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MR. ENYART

Mr. ENYART. Do/can the U.S. and Russian interests align in Syria? If so what, if anything, can Congress do to help align them?

Secretary KERRY. [The information was not available at the time of printing.]

Mr. ENYART. Syria is not governed by its Sunni majority. It is aligned with the only Shia led nation, Iran. Our major supply lines to Afghanistan cross over or thru Pakistan and other Islamic countries. We have seen Pakistan shut down supply routes before. What is your assessment of the likelihood of Pakistan or other Sunni nations acting to shut down supply routes to Afganistan?

Secretary KERRY. [The information was not available at the time of printing.]

Mr. ENYART. Russia appears to want to eliminate chemical weapons in Syria to protect Assad's rule. I suspect to keep their Naval base in Syria and maintain Syria as a client state. If Assad turns over the CW to international control is the U.S. prepared to allow Assad to stay in control or seek asylum?

Secretary KERRY. [The information was not available at the time of printing.]

Mr. ENYART. What impact will military strikes in Syria have on our mission in Afghanistan?

Secretary KERRY. [The information was not available at the time of printing.]

Mr. ENYART. Do/can the U.S. and Russian interests align in Syria? If so what, if anything, can Congress do to help align them?

Secretary HAGEL. Russia is reluctant to abandon its long-standing relationship with the Assad regime. Nonetheless, Russia shares our concerns, and those of the international community, regarding what it views as the potential for regional instability should this conflict remain unresolved and Syria retain its chemical weapons program. The United States and Russia have agreed on a framework to eliminate Syria's chemical weapons program. This framework agreement represents an important step toward degrading the Assad regime's ability to use chemical weapons. Congress's continued support for this challenging, yet extremely important program is crucial to hastening a political transition in Syria and bringing an end to this conflict.

Mr. ENYART. Syria is not governed by its Sunni majority. It is aligned with the only Shia led nation, Iran. Our major supply lines to Afghanistan cross over or thru Pakistan and other Islamic countries. We have seen Pakistan shut down supply routes before. What is your assessment of the likelihood of Pakistan or other Sunni nations acting to shut down supply routes to Afganistan?

Secretary HAGEL. Since the ground lines of communication through Pakistan reopened in July 2012, we have steadily improved our bilateral defense relationship. We do not believe that Pakistan would respond to a U.S. strike against Syria by shutting down the supply routes. Although all Central Asia republics are predominantly Islamic, and four of the five have Sunni majorities, they are still largely secular states and we assess religious considerations are not drivers in their political decision-making. We assess that Central Asian states will continue to support U.S. supply routes to Afghanistan.

Mr. ENYART. Russia appears to want to eliminate chemical weapons in Syria to protect Assad's rule. I suspect to keep their Naval base in Syria and maintain Syria as a client state. If Assad turns over the CW to international control is the U.S. prepared to allow Assad to stay in control or seek asylum?

Secretary HAGEL. Our policy remains that Assad must go, and we would remain committed to this policy if Assad did agree to turn over his stockpile of chemical weapons. We have been clear for quite some time that Assad has lost all legitimacy to lead the Syrian people. Assad must do more than agree to turn over his chemical weapons. His regime must be held accountable for ensuring the full implementation of this kind of agreement.

Mr. ENYART. What impact will military strikes in Syria have on our mission in Afghanistan?

Secretary HAGEL. The ongoing mission in Afghanistan remains a priority for both the President and me, and we are committed to a responsible drawdown of U.S. forces and assets in the region on a timeline consistent with U.S. commitments at the 2012 NATO Summit in Chicago and the President's 2013 State of the Union Address. With this in mind, any U.S. military strikes in Syria will not impact our ongoing mission in Afghanistan.

Mr. ENYART. Do/can the U.S. and Russian interests align in Syria? If so what, if anything, can Congress do to help align them?

General DEMPSEY. The U.S. and Russia do have shared interest in facilitating cooperation toward resolution of the Syrian conflict in a peaceful manner while ensuring the conflict is not exacerbated or spread into border regions. We both seek to minimize the prospects for propagation of radicalism and terrorism. We are working on cooperative efforts to ensure a comprehensive declaration and elimination of Syrian CBW stocks, as well as effective international verification of all activities pertaining to the secure storage and timely elimination of CBW stocks and related equipment.

Mr. ENYART. Syria is not governed by its Sunni majority. It is aligned with the only Shia led nation, Iran. Our major supply lines to Afghanistan cross over or thru Pakistan and other Islamic countries. We have seen Pakistan shut down supply routes before. What is your assessment of the likelihood of Pakistan or other Sunni nations acting to shut down supply routes to Afganistan?

General DEMPSEY. [The information referred to is classified and retained in the committee files.]

Mr. ENYART. Russia appears to want to eliminate chemical weapons in Syria to protect Assad's rule. I suspect to keep their Naval base in Syria and maintain Syria as a client state. If Assad turns over the CW to international control is the U.S. prepared to allow Assad to stay in control or seek asylum?

General DEMPSEY. I defer to the Department of State to comment on our current diplomatic efforts regarding Assad's political future.

Mr. ENYART. What impact will military strikes in Syria have on our mission in Afghanistan?

General DEMPSEY. Military strikes in Syria will not impact our ongoing mission in Afghanistan. The military forces and assets arrayed for operations against Syria have been carefully selected to ensure they have not been re-directed or drawn from forces supporting ongoing U.S. operations in Afghanistan.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MRS. NOEM

Mrs. NOEM. The Administration has argued that Iran, Hezbollah and North Korea are watching the U.S. response to Syria's chemical weapons use. If this is the case then how would you explain the lack of action over the past year when there was "high confidence" intelligence that Assad's regime had used chemical weapons on a small scale multiple times?

Secretary HAGEL. Following the Assad regime's prior use of chemical weapons, the United States did take action. Specifically, we augmented the provision of non-lethal assistance to the civilian opposition, and authorized the expansion of our assistance to the Supreme Military Council (SMC). Movement to kinetic action would be the result of a deliberate process designed to respond to an intransigent, reckless regime that uses chemical weapons against its own people.

The indiscriminate and large-scale use of chemical weapons by the regime on August 21 violates clearly established international norms against the use of chemical weapons and the law of war. Left unanswered, there is serious danger that the August 21 use of chemical weapons would lead to further use in this and future conflicts. The August 21 attack threatens to destabilize this important region further, and thereby threaten core U.S. security interests.

Mrs. NOEM. Many of the intelligence reports have indicated "high confidence" about Assad's use of chemical weapons. However, similar intelligence estimates with the same distinction have been wrong in the past. Is there a specific probability or methodology for labeling intelligence "high confidence"?

Secretary HAGEL. High confidence generally indicates that our judgments are based on high-quality information, and/or that the nature of the issue makes it possible to render a solid judgment. A "high confidence" judgment is not a fact or a certainty, however, and such judgments still carry a risk of being wrong. High quality information can be described as well-corroborated from proven sources, requires minimal assumptions, and is based on strong logical inferences.

Mrs. NOEM. Do you agree or disagree that Assad's reputation within Syria would be strengthened if his regime were able to withstand a U.S. strike?

Secretary HAGEL. [The information referred to is classified and retained in the committee files.]

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